

# **PRABUDDHA BHARATA** *or* **AWAKENED INDIA**

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



**February 2018**

**Vol. 123, No. 2**

**₹ 15.00**

# THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON

## *The Genius of Sri Krishna I*

**Y**ou may be the greatest philosopher but as long as you have the idea that you are the body, you are no better than the little worm crawling under your foot! No excuse for you! So much the worse that you know all the philosophies and at the same time think you are the body! Body-gods, that is what you are! Is that religion? Religion is the realisation of spirit as spirit. What are we doing now? Just the opposite, realising Spirit as matter. Out of the immortal God we manufacture death and matter, and out of dead dull matter we manufacture spirit. Therefore, Krishna says if your method is better and higher, you have no business to say that another man's method is bad, however wicked you may think it. Again, we must consider, religion is a matter of growth, not a mass of foolish words. Two thousand years ago a man saw God. Moses saw God in a burning bush. Does what Moses did when he saw God save you? No man's seeing God can help you the least bit except that it may excite you and urge you to do the same thing. That is the whole value of the ancients' examples. Nothing more, just signposts on the way. No man's eating can satisfy another man. No man's seeing God can save another man. You have to see God yourself. All these people fighting about what God's nature is—whether He has three heads in one body or five heads in six bodies. What fools we mortals be! Sure, lunatics! In India it has come down as a tradition that if there is a God, He



must be your God and my God. To whom does the sun belong! You say Uncle Sam is everybody's uncle. If there is a God, you ought to be able to see Him. If not, let Him go. Each one thinks his method is best. Very good! But remember, it may be good for you. One food which is very indigestible to one is very digestible to another. Because it is good for you, do not jump to the conclusion that your method is everybody's method, that Jack's coat fits John and Mary. All the uneducated, uncultured, unthinking men and women have been put into that sort of strait jacket! Think for yourselves. Become atheists! Become materialists! That would be better. Exercise the mind! What right have you to say that this man's method is wrong? It may be wrong for you. That is to say, if you undertake the method, you will be degraded; but that does not mean that he will be degraded. Therefore, says Krishna, if you have knowledge and see a man weak, do not condemn him. Go to his level and help him if you can.

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**F**rom *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2016), 1.456-57.

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# **APPEAL FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

On 27 April 1901, by the invitation of Sir Henry Cotton, Chief Commissioner of Assam, Swami Vivekananda delivered his last public lecture at Quinton Hall, Shillong. Ninety-two years later, in 1993, this sacred land where the Quinton Hall stood came to the Ramakrishna Mission. To serve the youth of Northeast India, the Mission thereafter constructed the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Cultural Centre.



Presently the Cultural Centre empowers local youths by providing innovative technical training in computer software and hardware, classes on developing effective communication skills in the English, Hindi, and Khasi languages, and moral value education classes. The technical computer training is helping many students to find suitable employment. Every year more than 5,500 students receive training in computer software and hardware. In addition, local children receive classes promoting Indian culture and values, as well as developing artistic skills.



For the last 15 years the centre has trained more than 40,000 youths. Increasing demand for our training has compelled us to expand our facilities—hence the construction of a new building (G+3) on the same land was initiated with the assistance of the State and Central Government.

As the building nears its completion, a large-scale ceremony will be held on 27 April 2018. To commemorate this auspicious event, a Souvenir shall be printed and distributed, which will include reminiscences from senior monks, devotees, and well wishers. We humbly request your financial seva for the following:

1. Production of a Commemorative Souvenir – 17 lakhs
2. Expenditures for the function – 52 lakhs
3. Corpus Fund for maintenance of the new building – 56 lakhs

Donations may be sent by means of Cheque/DD in favour of “Ramakrishna Mission, Shillong”, to the address below. Our bank details are :

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May Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Ma and Swami Vivekananda bless each one of you for your kind and generous support.

Yours in the Lord,  
**Swami Sarvabhutananda**  
Secretary



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## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA

(Headquarters : Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, (Near Kolkata)  
Dist. Howrah, West Bengal - 711 202)

**Swami Vivekananda Marg (Beed Bypass),  
AURANGABAD - 431 010.**

### **The Universal Temple of Bhagwan Shri Ramakrishna (Under Construction) An earnest Appeal for generous donations**

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please accept our greetings and best wishes.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Aurangabad located on Swami Vivekananda Marg (Beed Bypass) is a branch center affiliated to Headquarters, Belur Math (near Kolkata). This ashrama is conducting various service activities in the field of health, education, child welfare, as well as spreading spiritual message of eternal religion as propounded by Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

This ashrama has taken up a new project of erecting a temple of Shri Ramakrishna. The work was commenced in December 2009 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

The temple will be a unique and imposing monumental structure of its kind in entire Marathwada region in general and Aurangabad city in particular. It will add a cultural and spiritual dimension to the historical city of Aurangabad. It will be a great attraction and a place for worship, prayer, meditation and inspiration for the local people. It is also expected that the good number of general public visiting Aurangabad city as tourists for visiting world heritage sites such as Ellora & Ajanta and pilgrims for visiting Ghrishneshwar Jyotirling, Shirdi, Paithan etc. will include visit to the temple in their itinerary. It is aimed for the benefit of one and all without distinction of caste, creed, and nationality.

The estimated cost of the entire project is Rs. 20 Crores. So far Rs. 15.00 Crores have been spent through public contribution. The balance amount of Rs. 05.00 Crores is needed to complete the construction of the Temple.

**We earnestly appeal to you to donate generously for this noble cause. Your support will indeed go a long way in our endeavor to erect this magnificent architectural edifice in the memory of Shri Ramakrishna who was the unique harmonizer of all the religions of the world and who dedicated his life to bring peace and welfare of mankind.**

**We value your help and co- operation immensely.**

Yours in the service of the Lord,

*Vishnupadananda*

**(Swami Vishnupadananda)  
Secretary**

**Temple Dimensions : Length: 156 ft. Breadth: 076 ft. Height: 100 ft.**  
**Temple Construction Area : 18000 Sq.ft.**  
**Garbhagriha : 24ft. x 24ft.**  
**Temple Hall for Prayer and Meditation : 70ft. x 40ft. Seating Capacity - 450**  
**Auditorium (Ground Floor) : 80ft. x 57ft. Seating Capacity - 500**  
**The entire Temple will be built in Chunar sandstone and interior in Ambaji and Makarana marble. Ceiling of the Temple Hall will be done in Teak Wood**  
**Estimated Cost : Rs. 20 Crores**



Model of the Proposed New Temple



**We accept Online donations. You may please credit your donation directly on our Online State Bank of India, MIT Branch, Aurangabad, A/c No. 30697728250, (Branch Code : 10791, IFSC Code:- SBIN0010791)**  
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**Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!**

## **Maitrayaniya Upanishad**

February 2018  
Vol. 123, No. 2

### **मैत्रायणीयोपनिषत्**

परं वा एतदात्मनो रूपं यदन्नमन्नमयो ह्ययं प्राणोऽथ न यद्यश्नात्यमन्ताऽश्रोताऽस्प्रष्टाऽद्रष्टाऽ-  
वक्ताऽघ्रातारसयिता भवति प्राणांश्चोत्सृजतीत्येवं ह्याहाथ यदि खल्वश्नाति प्राणसमृद्धो भूत्वा सन्ता  
भवति श्रोता भवति स्प्रष्टा भवति वक्ता भवति रसयिता भवति घ्राता भवति द्रष्टा भवतीत्येवं  
ह्याह अन्नाद्वै प्रजाः प्रजायन्ते याः काश्चित् पृथिवीश्रिताः अतोऽन्नेनैव जीवन्त्यथैतदपि यन्त्यन्ततः ।

॥६.११॥

*Param va etad-atmano rupam yad-annam-annamayo hy-ayam prano'tha na yady-ashnaty-ama  
nta'shrota'sprashtha'drashta'vakta'ghrata-arasayita bhavati pranamsbchotsrijati-iti-evam hy-aha-  
atha yadi khalv-ashnati prana-samriddho bhutva santa bhavati shrota bhavati sprashta bhavati  
vakta bhavati rasayita bhavati ghrata bhavati drashta bhavatityevam hy-aha annad-vai prajah  
prajayante yah kashchit prithivi-shritah ato'nnenaiva jivanti-atha-aitad-api yanty-antatah (6.11)*

This indeed is the highest form of self, namely, food, for truly this life consists of food. If one does not eat, one becomes a non-thinker, a non-toucher, a non-seer, a non-speaker, a non-smeller, a non-taster, and one lets go one's vital breaths. For thus it has been said: 'If indeed one eats, one becomes full of life, one becomes a thinker, one becomes a hearer, one becomes a toucher, one becomes a speaker, one becomes a taster, one becomes a smeller, one becomes a seer.' For thus has it been said: 'From food, indeed, are creatures, whatsoever dwell on earth, are produced; moreover, by food, verily, they live and again into it they finally pass' (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.2.1).

(6.11)

# THIS MONTH

EVERYONE CAN THINK but all thinking is not original. How to develop original thinking by disciplining our thought processes is what is discussed in **Candid Critical Thinking**.

Sister Nivedita's life and teachings are remnants of a bygone era that beckon us to ignite our lives with at least an iota of inspiration that revolutionised that glorious life. Hers was an unbelievably active life and newer and newer material is being discovered even today, after 150 years of her birth. Sarada Sarkar, researcher and history teacher from Croydon, UK has relentlessly pursued all connections of Sister Nivedita and has established contact with her living relatives. To one such relative, Chris Orpen, she sent the January 2017 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, which was focussed on the theme 'Sister Nivedita: Offered to India'. Orpen wrote to Sarada Sarkar with full of appreciation and also with rare archival material on and by Sister Nivedita. The fourth and final instalment of the facsimiles of that material and their transcription is being provided in **Her Family Remembers Sister Nivedita and Some Other Papers**.

Patricia E West, a writer from rural Wisconsin explains the Life Wheel and its significance in **Hubba Hubba's Riddle**.

The great religions and sapiential philosophies are often in near-verbal agreement regarding the meaning and purpose of beauty. In **Beauty in the Traditional Metaphysical Perspective**, Imad Jafar, a religious studies and art history scholar from Karachi, Pakistan, attempts

to survey beauty's connection to love, virtue, knowledge, and art according to the traditional metaphysical point of view. To this end, he uses both ancient and medieval Eastern and Western primary sources to support his perspective.

The basic similarities between the religious views of Swami Vivekananda and Narayana Guru are analysed and their potential to bring about peace and harmony in the world is discussed in **Religious Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Narayana Guru** by Betty Sunny, a research scholar in philosophy at the University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.

Many wonderful nuggets of wisdom contained in ancient scriptures are difficult to understand. In *Balabodha*, such ancient wisdom is made easy. This month's topic is **Yoga**. Understanding this word is necessary to understand the various practices that go by this name.

What happens to the sins that are washed off in the River Ganga? Where do they go and what happens to those who commit them? These questions are answered in the story **The Plight of the Sins that are Washed in Ganga**. This story is this month's *Traditional Tales* and has been translated from the Tamil book *Arulneri Kathaigal*.

Colin Stanley, a founder and managing editor of Paupers' Press and a part-time employee at the Nottingham Trent University, has written the book **An Evolutionary Leap: Colin Wilson on Psychology**, about the work of the existential philosopher Colin Wilson (1931–2013). From this book, we bring you this month's *Manana*.



# *Candid Critical Thinking*

**T**HINKING IS A FACULTY that is most developed in the human beings. There can be various kinds of thinking. Thinking for accomplishing something is the most common type of thinking. This thinking is rather utilitarian and sometimes takes the greatness away from thinking and is better-called planning. Then, there is thinking about almost anything, out of anxiety. This is what is called worrying. Most people spend their entire lives switching between planning and worrying and some overdo it to such an extent that they are unable to tell the difference. However, both modes of thought are in truth disgrace to the faculty of thinking.

There is another, rather popular, mode of thinking—imagination. It is also a different way of thinking, only more interesting and fanciful, because it has the therapeutic effect of remedying whatever has gone wrong in the individual and social life, albeit only in someone's mind. Also, imagination gives much hope to people caught up in the humongous pressure of making a living. Even the wealthy have the stress of maintaining their standard of living and much more stressful is the artificially created need to maintain a good image among the others. It is in this context of a maddeningly strained world that imagination comes as a rescue—imagination through stories, written or performed. Recent worldwide increase in the public interest in fantasy proves that imagination is seen more as an essential escape route to get away from the binding realities of life, than as a source of entertainment.

Apart from the above mentioned three ways of thinking, there is a mode of thought that can only be truly called thinking, that of critical thinking.

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**The litmus test of critical thinking is that one should be able to critically analyse oneself.**

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ical thinking. Critical thinking has led to all the development of human civilisation as we see it. When the legendary apple fell, it was critical thinking that led to the discovery of the gravitational force. It was critical thinking that led to a new discovery when some water spilt from the bathtub. More recently, it was decades of critical thinking that led to the discovery of gravitational waves. Critical thinking requires that all observed data is systematically analysed, evaluated, and conceptualised.

Here, the process of thinking starts right from the process of observation and so, the observation has to be as precise as possible and also such observation should not be affected by any extraneous elements or phenomena. For example, if a person is observing another person from a distance, the observer's culture and upbringing affect the manner in which the observed person is seen. Most of the time, such an observation fails to be critical. Only if the observer can free oneself from all preconceived notions and other mental baggage will it be possible for the observer to make a critical and unbiased observation.

Reason is the bedrock of critical thinking. Without a rationale or logic to build upon, critical thinking is impossible. Any logical method tainted

by selfish interests ceases to be logical. Selfishness is the ultimate bias of all logic. That is why we see that a carefully thought out structure of anything is inexplicably destroyed because of some vested interest. For instance, when an organisation has to buy some equipment, sometimes it is seen that in spite of getting many quotes for the equipment, the order is given to a firm based on some personal preferences. This destroys the very foundation of critical thinking. Sometimes, people have ridiculously irrational ideas or notions about some people, countries, or cultures because of their perceptions that have never been critically analysed.

The litmus test of critical thinking is that one should be able to critically analyse oneself. That is, the very observer critically analyses oneself. The tendency to analyse the other is very common, but to analyse oneself is a rare trait. This is where candour enters critical thinking. Without being candid about oneself, particularly about one's weaknesses and failings, logic can be twisted to achieve practically anything that one desires. The proverbial devil starts quoting the scriptures and in no time something that is viscerally understood to be wrong gets the sanction of logic! This is why unselfishness is very important in critical thinking.

That brings us to a more important question. Is it possible for people to be unselfish? What would happen to critical thinking then? Yes, it is difficult to become completely unselfish, particularly for a person, who does not have any divine calling or does not live a spiritual life. And therefore, it is equally difficult to practise critical thinking in its true form. It is not surprising, therefore, to note that across the world, the first attempts at philosophy or science, were made not in laboratories or universities, but in monasteries; not by scientists or teachers, but by monks dedicated to knowing the final truth about God and this universe. It would not be entirely wrong to assume that the unselfish lifestyle of monastics led them to chart a path

towards the unbiased analysis of observed data.

What we learn out of this discussion is that for being truly logical or critical in one's thought, one needs to be mercilessly candid about oneself, or to put it in simpler terms, to be uncompromisingly truthful. Most of those claiming to practise truthfulness are really critical only of the others, and not of themselves. This is hypocrisy of the worst kind. Critical thinking requires that each aspect of the data observed gets the same kind of logical and systematic analysis. There cannot be a selective analysis nor a hypothesis or notion that has to be proven, which would obviously lead the data to be interpreted in a manner that supports the hypothesis. That is why many scientific experiments start with great enthusiasm but fail miserably because the initial enthusiasm was generated by a wrong reading of the observed data.

Logical fallacies are one of the biggest hurdles in critical thinking. Just as the Advaitin would call this entire universe as an illusion, there are many ways of illusory thinking. For example, one of the major fallacies is the failure to consider all the causes that lead to an event or phenomenon. Then, there is the fallacy of mistaking correlation for causation. If an event happens with another event, instead of considering it as a case of correlation, many consider it to be the cause, thereby declaring that one event is dependent upon another. Also, there may be many aspects of a problem and that problem cannot be properly analysed without considering all the aspects. However, we see in practice that many aspects of a problem are simply ignored while trying to solve a problem.

One could conclude that without an unselfish nature and complete dedication to the knowledge of the truth, it is impossible to have complete and undiluted critical thinking. It can be said that true critical thinking is possible only when one sees the reality of one's own nature and also of the manifested world, this universe. ❧

# Her Family Remembers Sister Nivedita and Some Other Papers

Sarada Sarkar

ON 4 JULY 2017, CHRIS ORPEN—the grandson of Mary Wilson, Sister Nivedita's sister—sent me a parcel of Sister Nivedita's family papers. The first instalment of this collection I had put together and it was published in the October 2017 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* as 'Sister Nivedita's Unpublished Letter and Family Papers'.<sup>1</sup> The second instalment was published in the November 2017 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* as 'On and About Sister Nivedita and Her Family'.<sup>2</sup> The third instalment was published in the December 2017 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* as 'About Sister Nivedita by Her Niece and Three Unpublished Letters of Sister Nivedita'.<sup>3</sup>

Sister Nivedita's sister Mary or May Wilson had a daughter named Ruth Olave Wilson aka Grancy, to whom William Noble, Sister Nivedita's brother Richmond Noble's son, wrote this letter in reply to one he had received from her. Isabel Noble was Richmond Noble's daughter:

[Page 1]

Southleigh, Somerford Road,

Cirencester, Glos GL7 1TX.

England.

28th March 1977

My dear Grancy,

Thank you so much for your warm and interesting letter. I was very touched by it and that you felt as though I was sitting next to you.

I thought that I would wait until after my term was over in order to write you a real letter—what news I have on the Noble side is I fear very scanty. You will be amused to hear that yesterday I wrote a whole sheet of family excerpts which Isabel gave me, and then tore it up as I thought it was just terribly depressing, giving mostly causes of death and not very elevating material. I hope that you will excuse a typed letter—I do this with my own family, and Christine complains that my own writing is getting smaller each year (probably the result of wearing glasses for reading). Christine [William Noble's wife] ordered the book, which we shall send to you immediately it arrives. Wonderful news—Christine has just returned to say that the book on Aunt Margot has now arrived, and so we shall be sending it off to you. I also, as you will know, wrote to Isabel giving her your news, and she has, I think, written to you. All the family news that I have, I got from her, my son Nicholas being also very interested—she says that she got this by pestering older members of the family for details, but she now wishes that she had pestered them far more!

It is very kind of you to be taking out your typewriter to give what you know, which I shall value greatly. I hope that this will not give you undue trouble, or be too much of an effort.

Father having been born so long after Aunt Margot and your Mother (Aunt May), and also not having known his father or his paternal grandparents means that there is quite a blank as far as information is concerned, added to which is the fact that he spent most of his youth



Southleigh, Somerset Road,  
Cirencester, Glos GL7 1XX,  
ENGLAND.

I wonder if Barbara Foxe is right in saying in her book that Aunt Margot's

interested in what you have to say about this.

way for a Government Roman Catholic priest.

Father, with 42 wounds from shrapnel, only just lived through.

Wonderful news - Christine has just returned to say that she looks on Count Marquis  
but for nothing it all to now.

much avoided, and so we shall be sending it off to you.  
With love from us both - Willson

Page 2



were the men they believed to be martyrs of the fight for Irish Independence ... to the Nobles, the issue was clear, and both Samuel Noble, Margaret's father, and his wife Mary Hamilton were reared on stories of Irish patriot fighting for Home Rule ... while Margaret was still a child, her parents left Ireland ... and it was not until (her father) he settled in Ct. Torrington that he sent for Margaret; in the meantime she had been living with her grandparents in Ireland, and the fiery Irish nature which she had inherited was already well nourished by their stories of the fight for nationalism.'

I am quite certain that some of the above is wrong, and I am doubtful about the rest. It is not clear from the book which grandparents are referred to, the Nobles or the Hamiltons. I should not have thought, although cannot be certain, that the Noble grandparents were keen on the fight for Home Rule, but I am quite certain that Grandmother (Mary Hamilton above) was not 'reared on Home Rule'—all the Hamilton background was the very reverse of all this. I should be most interested in what you have to say about this.

I remember your sister Cicely—I think that she graduated at Reading University. She came to Lisnatore more than once, and Father thought very highly of her. I remember your sister Margot [May's daughter] coming once—this must have been after 1923, as we had a car, and I remember our taking a trip along the coast road to Ballycastle. We were last in Ireland in 1969, spending a month there, landing at Cork and leaving from Rosslare. In the north, it was nice to see and stay with friends dating back from before my teens, with whom we correspond regularly. The troubles had only just started then, and I remember how my children were almost as keen to go along the TV trouble spots of Falls Road and Shankill Road as to visit the Giants' Causeway. I would not take them along those roads now. I hear regularly too from the daughter of our housekeeper (who must have been our cook when you came

to Lisnatore, and she married our gardener—a very convenient arrangement!)—she and her husband are in daily dread of having to clear out of the lovely little cottage and garden which they had created with their 2 children, as, with their neighbours they are being ejected to make way for a Government Roman Catholic housing estate project.

It would be so nice to have news of your husband and your family. I should imagine that you have a beautiful climate, and I should be very interested to hear details of your life. Some years before your sister Margot [May's daughter] unfortunately died, she wrote telling me that she belonged to the Progressive Party, and explained with most interesting detail what that meant. I fear that our leaders take a very short-sighted view of things, disregarding old friends, and playing into the hands of the communists. I suppose it is the price of our having lost the cream of our nation, plus their future families, in the two world wars. Father, with 42 wounds from shrapnel, only just lived through.

Turning to lighter topics, I had to put on my uniform the other day for the first time since the war (to take part in a school staff play, where we made fools of ourselves and the boys gave us wonderful applause)—it was quite a relief to find that I could still put it on! It seemed so strange to hear of your 70th birthday—I don't think of you as that age. Isabel is 67 and and I am 63.

With love from us both,

William

He wrote another letter to Grancy:

[Page 1]

Southleigh, Somerford Road,

Cirencester, Glos GL7 1TX.

England.

2nd May [19]77

My dear Grancy and Walter,

I am dashing this letter off to you, because



the members of the family going down with the Ceramic. When did that take place? It was distressing to read about Margot's [May's daughter] drinking—she must have been unhappy during all those years, and it is good to know that she escaped from it and finished so well. Was her marriage not a happy one? I regard these things as an illness, and there is usually some cause—although I know that there has been a family weakness in this direction, but I don't think so much in our direct family as in Great Grandfather's second marriage (I mean the Hamilton one).

Isabel has told me quite a lot about the family history, and I know that she will give you far more detail than I can, and what I give has largely been learnt from her. I used often to wonder why the Johnstones and the Hamiltons didn't get on. I am fairly sure that the Johnstones looked down on the Hamiltons because of the drinking, and they themselves were terrible snobs—even Ethel with her kind heart. There must also have been a bit of jealousy at Uncle Dick's money being used to support another branch of the family.

Regarding Father's dislike of Church, his upbringing has to be taken into consideration—brought up by the Hamilton grandparents amidst such strict Northern Irish sabbatarianism—several hours in church each Sunday. No wonder he turned against it, for he saw through a lot of the humbug. I have memories of being taken up the garden to escape our Rector's calls. Finally he persuaded Father to be his Churchwarden—Father agreed, provided he would only have to attend church on so many Sundays (I forget the number). He advised our Rector to spread them out one after another, hoping he would get the habit. But of course it put him absolutely off. Isabel on the whole knew Father better than I did—she lived more with him and worked with him—I was closer, I think, to my Mother. I always remember with gratitude to my Father the fact that, although his education never cost anything (he won all his way to Oxford through scholarships), he gave me a first class education to public school, when he was not at all well off (his war

pension was minute, although he had 42 shrapnel wounds, many in the head, and he was thus prevented for many years from doing as much as he would otherwise have been able to do), and never once reminded me of the fact that his own had cost nothing. He had a very strong sense of duty.

Yes, I covered quite a few ranks in the War—Private (or Gunner, as we were called in the Artillery) to Lt. Colonel. I was just comforting a boy this Morning who had been passed over as prefect, and whom I had seen with tears in his eyes in form this first day of term. His father died suddenly last year (quite young) and I knew he was thinking of this not very worthwhile boy who has been promoted over him, and if only his father was there to help. So I told him a bit about the truths of the challenges we meet and how misfortunes so often are blessings. I did not unduly mind the ranks (I was a sergeant for most of that time), but was there long enough to make me determined to get on, and my experience there, having had to do the jobs, was after a great help. I have had two or three experiences in life, and I am sure that you have too, which I thought were terrible at the time, but which turned out to my advantage in the longer term. So with this young chap, who would not worry when he is 21 whether he has been a prefect or just a monitor at his prep school.

*May 8th:* I fear that I did not finish the above last weekend as planned—Isabel's husband's brother rang me up from London, and the four of us went off on a spree to Bath. It was a lovely surprise yesterday to get your letter of 2nd May and to know that the book arrived. I had the same feeling about Aunt Margot's background—no life and pathetically little of it. So regrettably, there was obviously no material to work upon. You are right in assuming that I am not so interested in Swamiji himself—I am only interested in the Hindu religion in so far as Aunt Margot was concerned, but I am extremely interested in all that she did. I should be most grateful to have *La Fille d'Inde*, if it would not be too much trouble for you to send. Please don't trouble to



July 27/25.

Darling Grancy.

Mother asked us to send the £2 (for which I got 200 fcs) Mother is going to write to you when she gets letters from the girls.

We got your jolly letter this morning - you seem to be having a really sunbecoming time. Is there any competition for the best roasted back ruck. Sheila was delighted with her letter - is writing to you.

Your poem was delightful we enjoyed it. You never know what this family is going to turn out next.

Much love from both of us  
Father.

I don't mind how soon the whole two months is over.

Letter of Jagadish Chandra Bose to Grancy, Dated 27 July 1925

send the photographs, as they must mean much to you also, but thanks for offering. Aunt Margot was a very handsome person—her features so aquiline and face full of character. I could readily recognise her as Father's sister—quite alike from pictures I had seen of him before his face had been bashed about. I have 2 of his books—*Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge* (this is a 'must' for 'A' level English students), and *Shakespeare's Use of Song*. The third must be *Arts and Living*, which I should be most interested to read, but don't part with it if it means much to you. It is not in print.

Christine sends you her love, and says that it is sweet of you to include her in your letters to me. We have just come back from H C (Choral) in our lovely perpendicular Ciren church, which contains no less than 5 chapels, and having been a parliamentarian, its coloured windows were mercifully spared by Cromwell's men. I hear that our old church in Ireland has

W. Ford  
7th Aug 26

my darling pet

I am so very glad to hear from you. I am sure with your active and vigorous nature you will accomplish what you are meant to achieve! S. Africa, that new country will give you the necessary opportunity. Now mind you have to work very hard, and put your mind to achieve one great thing. you will then have confidence in yourself.

I know it must have been very hard to bid good-bye to your numerous satellites, three years ago, when we were two, a little force of I mistake not. You must now have outgrown little forces, and must look for a new, or be a lioness yourself.

God bless you; let all your efforts prosper and tell me all about it

You don't say when you are going to Finchampstead. He will be in London from the 13th to the 16th Aug and will again come back on the 20th Sept. When you go to S. Africa you must pass London, won't you?

Yours affly  
Jagdish Bose

Your loving Uncle  
Bose

Letter of Jagadish Chandra Bose to Grancy,  
Dated 07 August 1926

had to have its altar window boarded up for years. How lucky we are to have colour and fine architecture with lovely music in our churches.

With much love from

William

The scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose wrote these three letters to Grancy:

1

[Page 1]

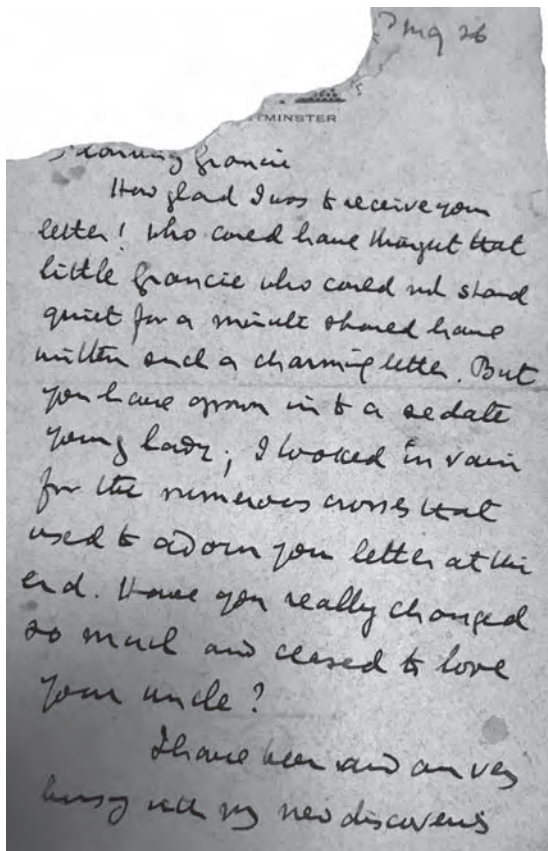
July 27/[19]25

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Mother asked us to send the £2 (for which I got 200 fcs). Mother is going to write to you when she gets letters from the girls.

We got your jolly letter this morning. You seem to be having a really sunbecoming time. Is





Page 1

Letter of Jagadish Chandra Bose to Grancy,  
Dated August 1926

there any competition for the well roasted fact and used? Shiela was delighted with her letter and is writing to you. Your poem was delightful and we enjoyed it. You never know what this family is going to turn out next.

Much love from both of us

Father

I don't mind how soon the next two months is over.

2

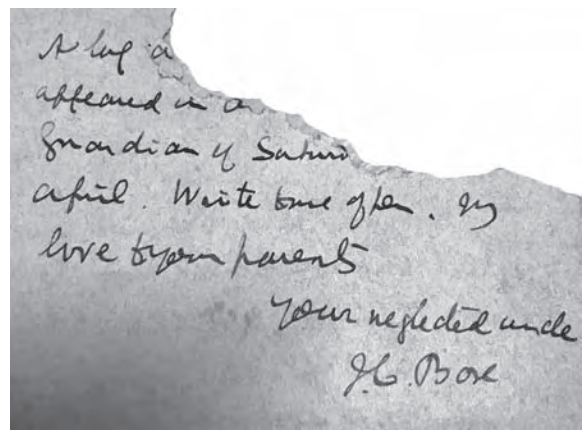
[Page 1]

Oxford

7th Aug [19]26

My darling pet,

I am so very glad to hear from you. I am one with your active and joyous nature. You will soon find what you are meant to achieve!



Page 2

Letter of Jagadish Chandra Bose to Grancy,  
Dated August 1926

S Africa, that new country will give you the necessary opportunity. Now you have to work very hard, and put your mind to achieve one great thing. You will then have confidence in yourself.

I know it must have been very hard to bid good bye to your numerous satellites, three years ago, then we one or two, a little fox if I mistake not. You must now have outgrown little foxes, and must look for Lion now, or be a Lioness yourself.

God bless you; let all your efforts prosper and tell me all about it.

Your loving uncle

Bose

[To this letter Abala Bose, Jagadish Chandra Bose's wife, adds her short note to Grancy.]

You don't say when you are going to Hinch-  
ingbrooke. We will be in London from the 13th  
to the 16th Aug and will again come back on the  
20th Sept. When you go to S Africa you must  
pass London, won't you?

Yours affly

Auntie Bose

3

[Page 1]

[Torn] Aug [19]26

Darling Grancy,

How glad I was to receive your letter! Who

27/8/1926

Indian Students Union  
Gower Street W.C.1  
London.

Xmas.

Grancy Darling. The choicest blessings  
be yours. How sweet of you to have London  
remembered me! I have to leave London  
Jan 2nd. Otherwise I was planning to come  
to Manchester to see you all! It is such a  
disappointment. 'Sister' used to tell me  
about you all and I feel that we belong  
to one 'Big Family'. Don't we? But I  
expect to see you in a year or two. I know  
the spirit of the Great ones are protecting  
and guiding you all. 'Sister' is much  
freer now and she can and does  
many things. Only remember child that  
all that is expected of us is to do our  
utmost: for the actual result we are not  
responsible. Mercifully so! We do not see the

Page 1

Letter of Boshiswar Sen to Grancy,  
Dated August 1926

could have thought that little Grancy who  
could not stand quiet for a minute should have  
written such a charming letter. But you have  
grown into a sedate young lady; I looked in  
vain for the numerous curves that used to adorn  
your letter at the end. Have you really changed  
so much and ceased to love your uncle?

I have been and am very busy with my new  
discoveries.

[Page 2]

A log a [torn page] appeared in a [torn page]  
Guardian of Saturday [torn page] April. Write  
to me of her.

My love to your parents

Your neglected uncle

J C Bose

It is interesting to note that Boshiswar Sen  
(1887-1971), a research assistant and disciple of  
Jagadish Chandra Bose, wrote a letter to Grancy:

[Page 1]

[Torn] Aug [19]26

Indian Students Union

the purpose. There is Mercy in what He  
gives and also the same amount of Mercy  
in what He does not give.

Your heritage is great. Go on  
and prosper and may the Mother of the  
Universe make you three the best of the  
women is the wish and prayer of  
your friend  
Boshi Sen

Page 2

Letter of Boshiswar Sen to Grancy,  
Dated August 1926

Gower Street WC 1

London

Xmas.

Grancy Darling,

The choicest blessings be yours. How sweet  
of you to have remembered me! I have to leave  
London Jan 2nd. Otherwise I was planning to  
come to Manchester to see you all! It is such a  
disappointment. 'Sister' used to tell me about  
you all and I feel that we belong to one 'Big  
Family'. Don't we? But I expect to see you in  
a year or two. I know the spirit of the Great  
ones are protecting and guiding you all. Sister  
is much freer now and she can and does many  
things. Only remember child that all that is ex-  
pected of us is to do our utmost: for the actual  
result we are not responsible. Mercifully so! We  
do not see the

[Page 2]

the [sic] purpose. There is Mercy in what He  
gives and also the same amount of Mercy in  
what He does not give.

Your heritage is great. Go on and prosper  
and may the Mother of the Universe make you  
three the best of the women is the wish and  
prayer of

Your friend

Boshi Sen

Isabel Noble wrote these four letters to  
Grancy:



Sleepers Meadow Farm,  
South Newbury, VT 05666  
Feb 14, 1977

My dear Grancy,

What a suitable date on which to renew acquaintance! I have meant for several years to write, having acquired an address from Shirley Orpen - but I lost it before I got round to writing and by that time didn't even know where she was.

I corresponded with Margaret until her premature death at 67 - which is my age now - I shall be 68 in May. It is nice to know you are married with children and grandchildren. My husband has been dead since 1959 but, although he was in ill health for several years (arterio-sclerosis) we were a very happy couple, any clouds on the horizon came from outside, never between us. My surviving daughter is also happily married but unfortunately her husband has suffered from a nervous disorder for 8 years. He is just now beginning to get over it. Their three boys are splendid - John 13, Timothy, 11 and Ryan Dana, 8. John is all science, wears glasses but is really good looking. Tim is a quiet chap, rather like William's boy, Nick and Ryan isn't like anyone on our side of the family. Their father's name is Rod Grow. Selenda is a very creative person. She has been unable to leave her husband to take outside work which is a great pity as she has much to offer. She took her degree in Science, minoring in education at University of Vermont and has a nice garden and works hard with the boys' education. Though they are very hard up most of the time the boys are blest in having a mother who guides them as she does.

I lead an informal semi-regulated sort of life. I live on a farm and am postmaster in a tiny office in the shed! It pays quite well but unless they are it out I'll have to retire when I'm 70. Winters are rather long but I feel much better in this climate than ever I did in Ireland. My only real drawback is that I really never had very good sight and therefore can't drive which is really a necessity these days. However I've trained myself to do without a car.

I was very annoyed by Aunt Margaret in the descriptions of her early life as they were most inaccurate and I wish I had some basic dates to put it right - at least in my copy and in the short life put out by the Sister Nivedeta School in Calcutta. I have some nice pictures of the statue to her memory that friends took when they were in India last year and an Indian scientist at Univ of Toronto who stayed here a few years' ago told me one could not grow up in India and not know the name of Nivedeta - she is in all the readers. The only details I have of your mother's early days are from what she told me when she came to Ireland in 1931. She said that her father's brother had written some letters in beautiful handwriting after her father's death. George was a great uncle, he must have been quite old. He was an atheist and a doctor and grew herbs - also a bachelor so that is the only record there was of him. What your mother remembered. It was she who told me about the little Uncle Andrew who was driven out of his mind by the wicked servants. She remembered the intricate toys he had made that were sent to your mother when he died in an institution.

Page 1

Letter of Isabel Noble to Grancy, Dated 14 February 1977

[Page 1]

Sleepers Meadow Farm,  
South Newbury, VT 05666.

Feb 14, 1977

My dear Grancy,

What a suitable date on which to renew acquaintance! I have meant for several years to write, having acquired an address from Shirley Orpen [wife of Chris Orpen]—but I lost it before I got round to writing and by that time didn't even know where she was.

I corresponded with Margaret [Margaret Bose Wilson, daughter of Sister Nivedeta's sister May Wilson] until her premature death at 67—which is my age now—I shall be 68 in May. It is nice to know you are married with children and grandchildren. My husband has been dead since 1959 but, although he was in ill health for several years (arterio-sclerosis) we were a very happy couple, any clouds on the horizon came from outside, never between us. My surviving

I asked Margaret once if she could send me any information about dates of the family. Later when I wrote again she said she had sent all the information she had - it must have got lost in the mails or a plane crash or something as I never had any family details at all. Then she died very soon after that and I wondered if she had thought she had sent me a letter and perhaps forgotten to post it.

Anyway I would very much like to know any of the early dates you can give me. William said you did not realize grandfather was a congregationalist minister at Great Torrington. He lived in the Howe farmhouse - which was so named after a very famous congregationalist of the second half of the 17th century. John Howe, and that was why Father's last name was Howe. Little Anne Isabel was buried there - I do not know if she was born there - I don't know how long they were in Devon. There are so many things, I wish we could talk but I don't suppose you will ever come to Vermont and I know I shall never go to South Africa. When Christopher was here I got him to describe Anna and I shut my eyes and set a picture in my mind. If you ever do decide to come to the States you know I have plenty of room and would love to see you. In the meantime do write. One thing puzzles me about the Nobles. Father always told me there were buried at Pimlico, Co Tyrone. I also William and family went there and could find no records. I also wrote to the vicar of Drogheda, Co Tyrone, (where Bob Noble was vicar) and there were no records. If you do not have any record I shall have to write to the Archdiocese of Armagh to find out. John's father was an archdeacon, his son, John, was the one who travelled from Drogheda to Harrowpoint at the age of 38 and eloped with Margaret Willis age 19, who was staying there with her parents. They were Unitarians and never held any communication with her again.

One of the things about the biography that bothered me was that they said Rev Samuel and Isabella sent Margaret and father to Belfast and worked hard in their parish, teaching and preaching. I am sure it was only father who was brought up in Belfast. His sister took him over there but she returned to England, and I'm sure my grandmother was too busy having babies - who had 4 between Margaret and father, to do such teaching! All terribly sad. I taken in children. They are sad. Also a small photo of grandfather and he looked haggard and careworn. Your mother told me he was apprenticed to some very distant relatives in Co Down when he was 15 - his father had died. He did not find their methods of business equitable and he walked the 40 miles or so home, arriving barefoot. A man of integrity. As an Irish friend remarked to me the other day, "You are like me, you probably cut off your nose to spite your face!"

What are you like and what do you like doing. We didn't set on when we were small. You wouldn't let me sing - but don't feel badly, none of my family will ever allow me to sing, either! Do you remember Cousin Pessie. She is still living, not very well. Her elder brother is fine, he is 88, wrote a book recently, "Ready for Sea", it is about his career. From age 17 in a sailing ship. Helen's day looked just the same when I last saw it in 1964.

I'll be looking for a letter from you.

Yours affectionately,  
Isabel Noble

Page 2

daughter is also happily married but unfortunately her husband has suffered from a nervous disorder for 8 years. He is just now beginning to get over it. Their three boys are splendid—John 13, Timothy, 11 and Ryan Dana, 8. John is all science, wears glasses but is really good looking; Tim is a quiet chap, rather like William's boy, Nick and Ryan isn't like anyone—he might perhaps resemble you if he is like anyone on our side of the family. Their father's name is Rod Grow. Selenda [Isabel's daughter] is a very creative person. She has been unable to leave her husband to take outside work which is a great pity as she has much to offer. She took her degree in Science, minoring in education at University of Vermont—much like Cicely. She makes applique quilts and dried apple dolls and has a nice garden and works hard with the boys' education. Though they are very hard up most of the time the boys are blest in having a mother who guides them as she does.

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[Page 2]

I asked Margaret [May's daughter] once if she could send me any information about dates of the family. Later when I wrote again she said she had sent all the information she had—it must have got lost in the mails or a plane crash or something as I never had any family details at all. Then she died very soon after that and I wondered if she had thought she had sent me a letter and perhaps forgotten to post it.

Anyway I would very much like to know any of the early dates you can give me. William said

you did not realize grandfather was a congregationalist minister at Great Torrington. He lived in the Howe parsonage—which was so named after a very famous congregationalist of the second half of the 17th century, John Howe, and that was why Father's last name was Howe. Little Annie Isabel was buried there—I do not know if she was born there—I don't know how long they were in Devon. There are so many things, I wish we could talk but I don't suppose you will ever come to Vermont and I know I shall never go to South Africa. When Christopher was here I got him to describe Avoca and I shut my eyes and got a picture in my mind. If you ever do decide to come to the States you know I have plenty of room and would love to see you. In the meantime do write. One thing puzzles me about the Nobles. Father always told me they were buried at Fintona, Co Tyrone. William and family went there and could find no records. I also wrote to the vicar of Dromore, Co Tyrone, (where John Noble was vicar) and there were no records. If you do not have any record I shall have to write to the Archdiocese of Armagh to find out. John's father was an archdeacon, his son, John was the one who travelled from Dromore to Warrenpoint at the age of 38 and eloped with Margaret Neilas age 19, who was staying there with her parents. They were Unitarians and never had any communication with her again.

One of the things about the biography that bothered me was that they said Rev Samuel and Isabella sent Margot and father to Belfast and worked hard in their parish, teaching and preaching. I am sure it was only Father who was brought up in Belfast. His sister took him over there but she returned to England, and I'm sure my grandmother was too busy having babies—she had 4 between Margot and Father, to do much teaching! All terribly sad. I have the sermons. They are sad. Also a small photo of grandfather taken in Oldham. He died at about 35—this was a few years before and he looked haggard and careworn. Your mother told me he was 15—his father had died. He did not find their



-3-

Belinda is very busy all the time. She has been taking  
czech lessons as she couldn't find anyone to play the church  
organ and now in a pinch she can play it. It is quite hard  
remembering all the cues to come in on - the responses and  
things. Last Sunday she forgot she had the organ hymnbook for the hymn.  
I seen it. She stated she wanted to play and the number of the next  
response was different in that book so there was a ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ the north  
Country Church. The group she went to England with, and they are always  
giving concerts to raise money for their school. I hope to go to  
France in 1954. I am a still librarian at the Bradford elementary  
school - very ill paid but the school board doesn't think a librarian  
teaches math. However she will have to get a better job next  
year. Hard times, you know.

I just keep busy. Should write, but while cabins are still open  
don't seem to have time to settle down in peace and writing letters  
and stiffer so years ago. I have had a number in two cabins now, then one  
couple over Thanksgiving (next week) and after that I will have a  
week here like here and a week up for the winter. We watch the tempera-  
ture here and don't get up for fear of pipes freezing. The lowest so far  
has been 19°. Expect it to be lower tonight.

I am a member of the church, see/creed  
yesterday but I don't go. I am a member of the church, see/creed  
of American Legion Auxiliary and do odd things, like story telling to  
children at the local school when they have a party. I tell fairy stories over and over  
you remember them. I will tell you a few fairy stories over and over  
again - or perhaps it was the next year after you were in Ireland. I  
doeent remember one thing about it. His favorite was the White Cat.

This neighborhood has changed a lot since we came 32 years ago.  
So many people who have artistic, musical or literary interests have  
moved into a real estate 10 miles or less that it is very nice. An old  
mill has been restored in Bradford (4 miles) and is being used for movies,  
art shows and boutiques and exhibitions - also a restaurant will open  
there shortly. I must say the people one sees at the movies and shows  
are rather an odd bunch. I never see them anywhere else, they are mostly  
in their 30's or early 40's, the women have long hair and they wear  
woolly twed outfits as though they have no heat at home except wood  
stove - which is more than probable. We hear that means also but  
I do have an old teacher fall back on. I can't really describe them  
very well when we live in such different cultures - they look sort of  
rather roughly bohemian. We always wonder where they come from.

I met an old friend of M's and mine, he said he was never going  
back to Ireland. He said Northern Ireland was a Never-Never-Land that  
really was when we were growing up. It was safe for everyone.

I've been rattling away and don't seem to have told you much about  
ourselves. How is your family? Your grandchildren? How old are they?  
Will they be with you for Christmas? I t will be sad for my stepdaughter  
this year, she lost her husband last November - he was only just 58.  
Heart attacks were hereditary in his family. Two of his brothers had gone  
that way and another has had a severe heart attack but is keeping going.

With much love to you both,  
Your affectionate cousin  
*Sabine*

Page 2

Vermont 05066.

April 7, 1978

methods of business equitable and he walked the 40 miles or so home, arriving barefoot. A man of integrity. As an Irish friend remarked to me the other day, 'You are like me, you probably cut off your nose to spite your face!'

What are you like and what do you like doing? We didn't get on when we were small. You wouldn't let me sing—but don't feel badly, none of my family will ever allow me to sing, either! You remember Cousin Peggie. She is still living, not very well. Her elder brother is fine, he is 88, wrote a book recently, *Ready for Sea*, it was about his career from age 17 in a sailing ship. Helen's Bay looked just the same when I last saw it in 1964.

I'll be looking for a letter from you,

Yours affectionately with love

Isabel

My dear Grancy,

I haven't heard from you this year so thought I'd drop a line to ask if you had thought further about letting William or me have some of the material or a copy of it, relating to Aunt Margot. I would, as I believe I mentioned, be extremely grateful to you for any information you may have gathered from Aunt May about our family. As Father was only 3 months when his father died, and as he was not brought up by his mother, a lot of continuity was lost. For instance, at one time I think he returned to England to live with his Mother. In the introduction to one of Nivedita's books, it is stated that Grandmother made her home near Manchester when Richmond was big enough to go to school, and was there with her daughter. I never heard him say so. I know he was sent to a boarding school at about age [page torn] in either eastern Lancs or western Yorks. Thereafter he attended one term at Giggleswick and then at Bradford Grammar. where he lived in rooms. As

no time was his mother near enough for him to live with her. Did your mother mention where they lived before they lived in Wimbledon? I used to ask her questions about the Hamilton family, but never thought to ask about her own early life. It also states in both the introduction and in the French biography of Nivedita, that she was greatly influenced by her grandfather in Ireland, who was a lifelong fighter in the cause for Home Rule. That seems quite erroneous, since Great Grandfather H was a Methodist and pious and I'm sure conservatively North of Ireland in his political outlook. It does mention in the French book that Margot's uncle was a strong man for a free Ireland and that she used to sit on his knee near the fireplace and listen to all these men discussing that kind of politics. The only one that could have been was our grandfather Noble's brother, George.

Your mother told me he was a doctor, herbalist and atheist, but never mentioned his association with Margot, in fact until I read this biography, I did not know that our grandparents left her with her grandmother (presumably Noble) when they went to Manchester for him to study for the ministry. It says when she was 4 they sent for her to come to live with them in his first parish at Oldham, and that she found there a little two year old sister who cried all the time! There was an Irish servant who used to tell the little girls stories. Did your mother ever talk about the days in Oldham? Two little boys were born there. One cannot have lived long enough to have been a real baby, the other evidently did, as he is buried at Torrington age 14 months, though he must have died at Oldham. Was your mother born in 1869 or 1870? Little aunt Isabel was born in Oldham and died 1870 in Torrington, 4 years.

You see there is so much I don't know. I realize this as I realize my daughter doesn't have all the pictures in her mind about our family that I have. I think one tends to pass along as much as one knows from the remote past but one skips one's own past. This makes for gaps. Brother William fell on the ice on Feb 21st and broke

his pelvis. He is coming along very well. He was fortunate in that he was neither sitting there nor tried to get up, as a fireman passing in a car saw the fall and he and another man got him very carefully into a car and to the hospital where he was put in traction. He was there for some days and has been home since, with a bed in the drawing room and some visitors, even from some of his pupils which is very nice. I hope he doesn't retire too early as he is such a wonderful teacher and he and the boys enjoy each other. I am so glad that I went.

[Page 2]

Selenda is very busy all the time. She has been taking organ lessons as she couldn't find anyone to play the church organ and now in a pinch she can play it. It is quite hard remembering all the cues to come in on—the responses and things. Last Sunday she forgot she had the wrong hymnbook for the hymn. I mean it was the pitch she wanted to play and the number of the next response was different in that book so there was a long pause! She has gone to a concert this afternoon—she is in the North Country Chorus, the group she went to England with, and they are always giving concerts to raise money for their next trip. They hope to go to France in 1985. She is still librarian at the Bradford elementary school—very ill paid but the school board doesn't think a librarian rates teacher status. However she will have to get a better job next year. Hard times, you know!

I just keep busy. Should write, but while cabins are still open don't seem to have time to settle down in peace and am getting lazier and stiffer as years go by. I have hunters in two cabins now, then one couple over thanksgiving (next week) and after that I can have all the water drained out and close them up for the winter. We watch the temperature here like hawks—for fear of pipes freezing. The lowest so far has been 19 F [-7.2 degrees Celsius]. Expect it to be lower tonight. Had an inch of snow yesterday but it all melted by noon. I am clerk of the church, secretary/treasurer of American Legion

Auxiliary and do odd things, like story telling to the children at the local school when they have an oldtimers' Day. Do you remember I used to have to tell William fairy stories over and over again—or perhaps it was the next year after you were in Ireland. He doesn't remember one thing about it. His favorite was the White Cat.

This neighbourhood has changed a lot since we came 32 years ago. So many people who have artistic, musical or literary interest have moved into a radius of 10 miles or less that it is very nice. An old mill has been restored in Bradford (4 miles) and is being used for movies, art shows and boutiques and exhibitions—also a restaurant will open there shortly. I must say the people one sees at the movies and shows are rather an odd bunch—I never see them anywhere else, they are mostly in their 30's or early 40's, the women have long hair and they wear woolly tweed outfits as though they have no heat at home except a wood stove—which is more than probable. We heat by that means also but we do have an oil furnace to fall back on. I can't really describe them very well when we live in such different cultures—they look sort of rather roughly bohemian. We always wonder where they come from.

I met an old friend of Wm's and mine; he said he was never going back to Ireland. He said Northern Ireland was a Never-Never-Land that really was when we were growing up. It was safe for everyone.

I've been rattling away and don't seem to have told you much about ourselves. How is your family? Your grandchildren? How old are they? Will they be with you for Christmas? It will be sad for my stepdaughter this year, she lost her husband last November—he was only just 58. Heart attacks were hereditary in his family. Two of his brothers had gone that way and another has had a severe attack but is keeping going

With much love to you both,

Your affectionate cousin

Isabel

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[Page 1]

HFD Newbury, Vermont

05051 USA

November 13, 1983

My dear Grancy,

I haven't heard from you for a long time—nor written either. I hope your back has not given you much trouble. William tells me you are in great deal of pain but one wouldn't know it. It is a nagging thing. I suppose it is a deterioration of the vertebrae—you haven't really said what was wrong. I have a friend who has that but she is almost 90 and in a great deal of pain.

I went to England for a month and stayed all the time but two nights with William and Christine. I had got overtired my last summer in the post office, what with the cabins as well, and Selenda going to England with her chorus for 3 weeks and looking after the boys, so that I was on verge of anemia and a bad winter after I retired. Am feeling very well now, especially after good rest at William's. Didn't have to do a thing, but walked a lot. Weather not very warm was the only thing I didn't like. One really feels the cold when one gets older. I'm not looking forward to winter right now!

We have had only Ryan at home this autumn. John and Tim are away at college. John is at a technical college in Mass., an old established one his uncle and cousins went to and will major in computer science. Tim is at a small music and liberal arts school in Boston called Berkeley. He is studying music and writing. Guitar. He used to play trumpet and does some piano. His main interest is jazz. He is the most musical but unfortunately is deaf in one ear from a virus. William is now deaf in one ear from same reason. Ryan is quite ambitious. He milks on the farm for two hours in the morning before he goes to school and in the evening, also does a lot of drumming. Was in track. He is entering



I haven't heard from you for a long time. I've written a few  
 I hope your back has not given you much trouble. William tells of  
 you are in a great deal of pain but we wouldn't wonder it. It  
 is a heavy cross. I suppose it is a determination of the Lord. I  
 you haven't really said what you mean. I have a friend who has that  
 but she is about 30 and is in a great deal of pain.  
 I went to England for a month and stayed all the time but two  
 nights with me and explained. I had not visited for that short a  
 the post office, what with the sickness as well as the delays going to  
 England with her photos for 3 weeks and looking after the baby so  
 that I was on verge of anemia and had a bad winter after I retired.  
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 Ryan is quite ambitious. He milks on the farm for two hours in the  
 morning before he goes to school and in the evening, also does a lot  
 of drumming. He is in track. He is entering for Youth Orchestra of  
 America - hasn't a hope of course, but the entry will be good for

*Last Page*

Gt Grandfather, for all his piety, tumbled a bit on his way home from the office, and I suppose after his death it was sold off. Uncle Dick was apprenticed in linen I think, and then went into the Water Office where he remained till he retired in the 1920's. Grandmother (Mary Isabella) always resented the family business going off like that. There was no married woman's property act when her mother died, that must have been about 1850. It's funny I have no idea what happened to the Murdochs. There were two brothers who were dreamy and not much use, your mother said, also she thought, an aunt Bella (the one Grandmother was named for) (Mary was for her father's mother Molly McFarlane). Because Aunt Bella left grandmother a little money. Father never knew anything of any of them, this information also came to me from your mother.

[Page 1]

My dear Grancy,



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'I have a big bill.' I asked, 'What big bill?' She said, 'I don't know—but I do know there is one OUT THERE.' Well, the very next day her car broke down—the clutch and it took twice as much as the check to fix it. The final thing was good news. Two men dropped in unexpectedly Christmas Eve. One is an authority on Indian (American) artifacts and is a friend. I had sold him a totem pole last summer and I said, Oh, by the way I have located that blanket I was telling you about—but it really is full of holes. So I brought it down the attic, and he thumbed the holes and analysed the wool and talked about it. It was about a yard long—a squaw's shoulder blanket

[Page 2]

so he said it was probably only about 1890 as the wool wasn't very fine like that in the earlier flocks, and he went on talking and I wondered if he would offer me \$50, but he said, 'Well, it will take about \$500 to \$1,000 to mend it. I can write you a check now for \$1,000 and I can get it mended and if I can sell it for more than \$3,000 I'll split what I get over that with you. If it isn't worth that much I'll not bother to get it mended but sell it as is.'

Needless to say we were dumbfounded. He wrote out the check—needless to say it is now more or less gone with college fees—things are a bit tight—but it really made all the difference. Wasn't it like a Magi miracle? Don't worry about us, we do all right. It is just now with two boys in college. I only tell you the story because I think it's a good one. I tend to look at things objectively—that's the writer in me, I suppose. One of the nice things about this neighborhood is that most people have not exactly similar incomes, but are neither really rich nor unable to cope. Of course, there are people who are having a hard time with unemployment, but Vermont has been hit less than most places—life is always hard in Vermont, you either make it or you don't. When and if I can get hold of the author, I'll have to send you his book. I

could buy it in a store but if I buy it from him, he gets \$2 instead of 15¢. It's a funny book and I am in it on his personal list of real Vermonters though I wasn't born here. Mystery! It's called Real Vermonters Don't Milk Goats.

We went to *The Merry Wives of Windsor* a few nights ago. It was an amazingly good production and the audience was most enthusiastic—I haven't heard an audience like that since I went to my first and last James Bond movie about 18 years' ago. Falstaff was very good, he didn't buffoon too much, he was a regular old lecher but both comic AND WITH some dignity—kept reminding us of people we knew! My little finger keeps hitting capitals.

We have had a pretty good winter, just two spells of well below 0 F weather when the hot water froze and we found the cellar bricks had lost their mortar in one place. We hope we are fixed to withstand tonight and tomorrow—30 below 0 is projected. We usually get one or two mornings of that in a winter, and if one can keep warm that's not the main consideration, it's the PIPES. They have been all right the last two years as we were running a coal furnace but coal is too dear and my coalman has gone to college so we have the wood stoves and an oil furnace to take over when the stoves die down. We keep very cosy actually. I'd never looked at an outside thermometer in my life till I came to this country, but from the first winter in Massachusetts I found that was the first thing one did every morning. Here it's the main topic of conversation when the temp really gets down. 'How cold was it at your place, this morning?' '27 below.' 'Really, you are in a warm spot—we were 32 below.' I don't get as much of that now that I'm not in the post office of course. That's the only thing I miss—seeing the neighbors.

How is your health? William told me you were in a lot of pain most of the time—I am awfully sorry. It is hard to get old when one has disabilities, not fun. I'm glad you have such a wonderful son. And I expect you have a good climate, not damp.

I'm afraid my letter is all drivel—again thank you so much for the lace and you will let me know which great it was, won't you? And get some details of that awful school—I hate to ask you to write but perhaps you can dictate.

With much love,

Your affectionate cousin,

Isabel

PS: You asked about Alys Baker. I stayed with her in 1964 but can't track a few years later. If she is alive—which I doubt—she would be 90.

I am also giving here the image of a receipt issued to Sister Nivedita by Upendra Nath Biswas for the rent of a horse that she had hired from Biswas for fifteen days. It reads:

6th August 1911

Received from Sister Margaret E. Noble the sum of rupees twenty five only being the hire of a horse which was supplied by me from 17th to

31st July 15 days at the rate of Rs 50/- per month.

Rs 25/-

[Signature]

Upendra Nath Biswas

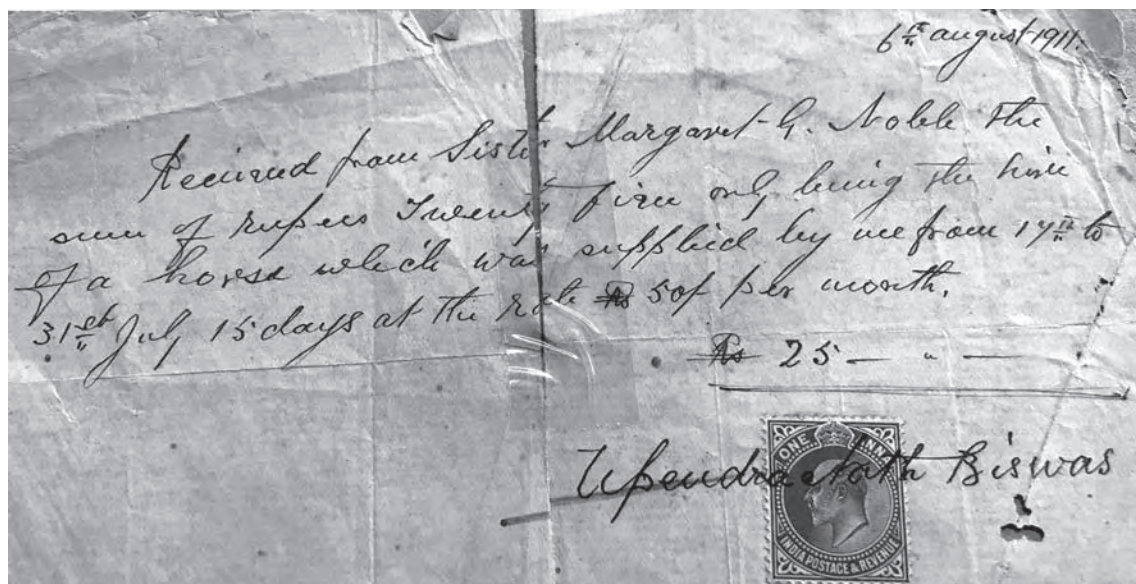
With this fourth instalment end the treasures from the papers I received from Chris Orpen. I fervently hope that researchers would be interested to work on the information we get from these papers and unearth new material on Sister Nivedita.

PB

### Notes and References

1. See Sarada Sarkar, 'Sister Nivedita's Unpublished Letter and Family Papers', *Prabuddha Bharata*, 122/10 (October 2017), 683–705.
2. See Sarada Sarkar, 'On and About Sister Nivedita and Her Family', *Prabuddha Bharata*, 122/11 (November 2017), 731–8.
3. See Sarada Sarkar, 'About Sister Nivedita by Her Niece and Three Unpublished Letters of Sister Nivedita', *Prabuddha Bharata*, 122/12 (December 2017), 779–87.

The Receipt Issued to Sister Nivedita by Upendra Nath Biswas for the Rent of a Horse





# Hubba Hubba's Riddle

Patricia E West

**M**Y PATERNAL GRANDFATHER, Hubble West, loved the English language. An enormous dictionary, well-worn from decades of use, sat opened atop a wooden pedestal next to his chair at the head of the dinner table. During meals, he'd challenge the children to define words used by adults in conversation and look up the ones they weren't sure of.

Hubba Hubba, as we called him, was also keen on riddles. Lodged permanently in my mind is this one: 'Why is the monkey that spins?'

His sage-like answer: 'The higher the fewer.'

Huh? It made sense in a koan-kind-of-way. But there was more that eluded me. His riddle lingered in the back of my mind as unfinished business.

Over time, it continued to resonate with my growing understanding of the universal Life Wheel as a mysterious but dynamic, multidimensional phenomena imbued with life-changing implications.

At the very least, it functions well as a yoga-like diagnostic and decision-making tool. It is highly useful in resolving inner conflicts as a preliminary step towards overcoming polarisation in the world, whether it be a conflict between empirical science and religious values, or between different nations.

But there's much more.

Here I'll begin with a basic description of the Life Wheel, the subject of an earlier article published in the August 2015 issue of *Prabuddha*

*Bharata*, 'As Conflict Escalates, What Can Be Done Now?'<sup>1</sup>

After reintroducing the Life Wheel, I'll expand from there, elaborating on applications and expansions of its riddle-like essence.

## The Basics

In 'Scientists and Sages Can Agree on This,'<sup>2</sup> I describe the Wheel. It is not 'new', nor is it an arbitrary mental confabulation. Its archetypal structure repeats throughout nature from atoms to planets orbiting around the sun. Its wheel-like pattern of concentric circles orbiting a central hub is mirrored in art and architecture from the beginnings of time. It embodies a timeless healing solution to the comparatively recent rift between materialist and philosophical definitions of 'reality':

The archetypal Life Wheel formulated as the Positive Paradigm of Change is a modern day descendant of the time-tested *Book of Change* which leaders in every field of endeavor have consulted for over eight-thousand years.

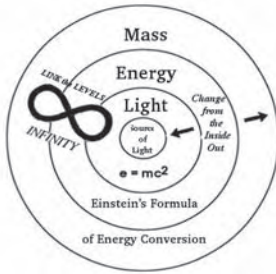
While true to the ancient teachings of India and China, it abstracts their essence in a simple and complete manner [designed to be] accessible to us *today*.

It places the three variables of Einstein's famous formula,  $e = mc^2$  mass, energy and light, on increasingly deeper levels within the Life Wheel. The result is the Unified Theory which Einstein already had, though didn't know it.<sup>3</sup>

The three outer levels are interrelated and interdependent. Each is necessary but not sufficient. Their existence depends upon the unchanging hub of the Wheel. The true Self—also called







Conscience, the Tao, or God—holds the spokes together as events on the Wheel's surface rim change continuously. Creation in

the form of primal consciousness emanates from and returns to this silent alpha-omega centre.

Complete and accurate, the Life Wheel meets the Occam's Razor standard by explaining the totality of human experience with maximum inclusiveness and utmost simplicity.

This wheels-within-wheels model is equally compatible with modern physics, yoga philosophy, and the world's great religions. It is a reality map upon which scientists and sages can agree.

A variation of the Life Wheel shows the relationship between surface flux and inner stability. That which is superficial and ephemeral is generated from and sustained by the eternal absolute.

In *Rethinking Survival*, I connected with the idea that the Life Wheel is the answer to an ancient Upanishad question: 'What is that, knowing which, all else is known?'<sup>4</sup> In essence, correctly understood and implemented, it holds the key to life.

The Positive Paradigm of Change can be personalised to facilitate positive personal change on all levels. Applied in increasingly larger scales of magnitude—to relationships, families, communities, and organisations—it has significant social implications.

## Applications

In the yogic tradition, breath awareness is used to 'go deep', quieting the scattered monkey mind of Hubba Hubba's riddle. By making the breath slow and even, it is possible to enter into a focused and contemplative state of the mind.

Pranayama practices regulate the noisy mind that ordinarily functions on the most rapid, beta brainwave frequency. Meditation cultivates alpha waves associated with relaxation and then the still slower theta waves associated with deep learning and inspiration.

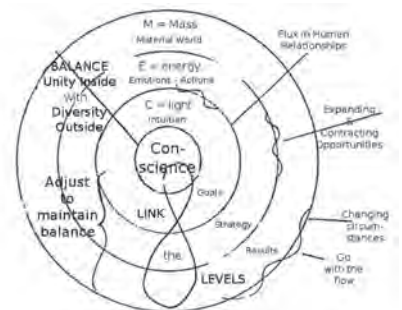
Further, according to the scriptures, the fully illumined sage links the levels of awareness, consciously living 'here yet there'. This fully-actualised state, *turiya* has been likened to 'Christ consciousness'.

So modern science now confirms what the ancients knew. Brainwave science applied in bio-feedback therapies correlates increasingly slower rates of breathing with entering into increasingly deeper, more inward levels of awareness. The following variation of the Life Wheel correlates scriptural descriptions of altered states of consciousness with Western medical science.

Another important application shows how the individual fits into the Life Wheel. Each of us is like a small sliver, a pie-slice part of the whole. Each of us is potentially complete, with all levels present and linked to a central, unifying central hub. This picture speaks to the right as well as the left brain. It is worth a thousand words.

As this application shows, the true pinnacle of success is not experienced at the surface of the Wheel. Paradoxically, the 'height' of human attainment resides not on the shallow level of outward surface appearances, but rather by going 'deeper'.

It is not defined by the accumulation of material wealth, prestige, power, and control over others. In a holistic view, success cannot be equated with rising to the top of any social or political hierarchy.



For, the true hierarchy is defined in the context of the Life Wheel, where power and wealth are put into correct perspective as equal parts blessing and responsibility. Accomplishments on the surface demonstrated by competence are im-

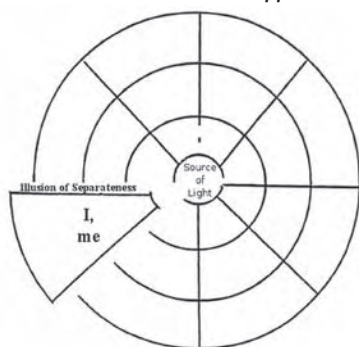
portant and necessary. However, they are completed and filled only by the attainment of access to inner wisdom and light—living and *acting* consistently with the conscience.

This picture shows that as a single individual recon-

nects with the centre that everyone everywhere shares in common, separatist illusions cease. Selfish exploitation of others recedes, partly because awareness of karmic returns heightens. As this happens, self-interest is increasingly aligned with socially responsible behaviour.

Further, this application of the Life Wheel explains why the true teachings of all times necessarily share the basics in common. Although surface versions take on new forms—expressed in different languages, images, and customs according to time and place—of necessity, they

*Illumined Minds Meet at the Center:  
True Pinnacle is the Most Inward and Invisible,  
Where Differences Disappear*



*Brainwave Patterns*

share central timeless truths in common. Truth is truth. It is, was, and always will be.

With determined effort, over time, Hubba Hubba's riddle monkeys spin—evolve—upwards or deeper, depending on how you look at it, through the inward-receding layers of the Life Wheel. In the archetypal process of the hero's journey, they encounter severe challenges. By overcoming obstacles—learning life lessons—they penetrate ever deeper towards the silent core.

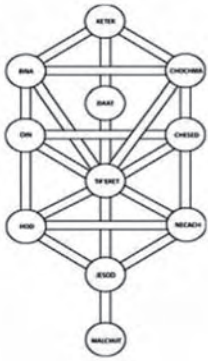
Few indeed are those imbued with sufficient love of truth, fierce desire to be one with it, and the courage to persist in the self-discipline and self-sacrifice required to reach the ultimate goal of human perfection. True, Jesus said, 'Ye must be perfect like your Father in Heaven.'<sup>5</sup> But he never said the journey would be easy.

## Expansions

From here, things get even more interesting. Now, the Life Wheel is a reality map, a meta-map—an archetypal map of maps, if you will. It is complete and accurate, as far as a two-dimensional representation can be.

But, maps, say of Earth's geology, or of the human habitations superimposed upon it, are flat. They are two-dimensional, whereas the territory they represent is at least three-dimensional. Still further, however, the reality towards the Life Wheel points, equally material and non-material, is multidimensional. It includes at least four dimensions—up to as many as eight by some accounts. And the meta-map mutates to represent these extra dimensions.

For example, the concentric circles of the Life Wheel pattern can be compared to the cross-section of a tree. When looked at from a horizontal perspective, an oak tree has circular layers growing around a central pithy core. One can also look at the same phenomena in its vertical dimension. Like a tree, the Life Wheel



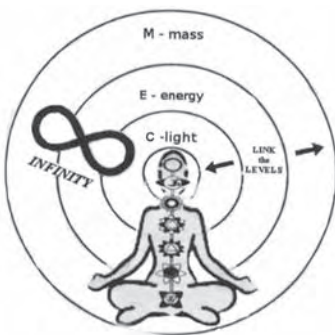
stretches infinitely upwards towards the sky and downwards, deeper than the sea.

For it is not just any tree, like an oak, of course, but rather a mystical, archetypal Tree of Life that echoes through the traditions of many

world cultures. Here is one particularly suggestive example: the biblical Tree of Life.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the ‘tree of knowledge’ is said to connect all forms of creation, linking heaven to the underworld.<sup>6</sup> This universal concept is widespread in religious and philosophical traditions. In a famous passage by Charles Darwin, the Tree of Life was also used as a metaphor for the phylogenetic tree of common descent in the evolutionary sense.<sup>7</sup>

Then again, the Life Wheel nicely accommodates the subtle energy centres described in both Asian and Indian records. In Sanskrit, they are called chakras. The picture looks like this:



human spine—is Wheel or circle. The term is associated with cycles of nature, the ‘wheel of time,’ and the ‘wheel of fate.’

Readers familiar with yoga anatomy are already well-familiar with the concept. Suffice it to say here that starting with Rig Veda, we know of

seven energy centres that traverse the spine. They comprise a subtle body interior to the physical body, connected to it through channels called *nadis*. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the channels are called *meridians*, which also parallel the physical nervous system.

A primary pair of *nadis*, *ida* and *pingala*, twine around the spine, intersecting at the major energy centres and joining at the sixth, or *Ajna* centre known as the third eye. Pictured as snakes, this pair correlates with the primal energies called 'yin and yang' in Chinese philosophy.

Interestingly, the roots of *hatha* in *ha-tha* yoga translate as ‘sun’ and ‘moon’. Since ‘yoga’ means union, the larger term translates as the union of sun and moon. It refers to balancing of the constituent masculine and feminine energies inherent within each of us, regardless of gender.

According to TCM, when complementary masculine and feminine polarities are properly balanced, harmonised, and unified, they produce health on all levels. Conversely, separating them or placing them in unnatural conflict produces unhealthy extremes of excess and deficiency. As energies fragment, they tear the physical body and body politic apart. For by extension, escalating polarisation of today's societies is an external reflection of inner imbalances.

The Greek caduceus, the familiar symbol of the Western medical profession, serves as a vestigial reminder of the medical sciences historically shared by the Western and Asian healing arts, dating even further back to ancient Egypt's Hermetic tradition.

In Greek mythology, the caduceus is the healing staff of Mercury, a messenger of the gods. It links heaven and earth. The axis of the staff represents the human spine. The pair of snakes winding around the axis represents alternating,



cyclical patterns of negative and positive—yin and yang—energy currents.

The six chakras are the intersecting points where the curving snake-like energy forces meet and cross at the axis. These are the major centres of transformation and evolution.

The wings at the top of the axis represent the integrating crown chakra.

### **Psychology's Blind Spot**

Unfortunately, the operation and influence of chakras are associated with the  $e$  = energy level of the Life Wheel—a fatal blind spot of Western psychologies. This is because, although the presence/influence of energy centres is experienced and described by experienced meditators, they cannot be observed, quantified, or standardised in empirical terms. As a consequence, scientists have ruled out the reality of their existence.

Ironically, thus stranded from the mainstream of traditional psychologies, Western scientists lament that their empirical science cannot account for consciousness. Solutions to their unanswered questions rest in the ancient subtle sciences. Science, by the way, simply means, *with knowledge*. Where or how knowledge is obtained is not exclusive to empirical means. The existence of chakras within the context of the Life Wheel fills a glaring gap in the academic knowledge base.

It gives a new view of evolution as well. The spinning monkey-mind moves up the chakra chain, slowly reversing the bifurcating process of duality to attain, at long last, the peace of unified stillness. So, *why* is the monkey that spins? What is its motivating Nietzschean purpose? Unity. Moving successively through the chakras, spinning in resonance with each of them in turn, the monkey evolves upwards. The higher up the ladder of life the monkey mind goes, the fewer doubts and fears, the less ignorance and confusion in life; the less fragmented, aimless chatter.

One Western psychologist is fascinated with the Egyptian worship of the eye as a function of consciousness—the ability to focus, to pay close attention to the calling of conscience. The *ajna* centre nicely explains the connection. It serves to link heaven and earth. As the command centre of the physical endocrine system of ductless glands, it coordinates bodily functions. At the level of intelligence, it mediates in the decision-making process so that choices are aligned with the higher will.

Now, the Western way of ignoring and denying the reality and influence of chakras makes life's journey far more difficult than need be. But it can't and doesn't cause them to cease to exist. Most of us still have glimpses of transcendent experience, most often through the arts.

For example, music moves us because its sound sets the chakras in sympathetic vibration. Inspired music has a healing, uplifting effect on the nervous system, the emotions, and the soul. It is not mere coincidence that the seven notes of the Western chromatic scale correspond with the vibratory rates of the seven major chakras. Indian ragas intentionally draw on chakra correlations to soothe emotions or lift the spirit. In the West, similar effects of inspired music, especially by Mozart, have been correlated in *The Mozart Effect*.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, the—albeit too-often unconscious—effect of the chakras on human experience is particularly strong in the visual arts, including the full spectrum from fashion and homemaking to interior design, architecture, and fine arts. This is due to the fact that the chakras are associated with geometric shapes, as well as with specific colours of the rainbow spectrum.

This blind spot explains why many of Hubba Hubba's monkeys get stuck so that the number which continues to dance and spin grows ever fewer. This point, therefore, bears especially close attention. The only way to truly heal or overcome conflict generated by false and incomplete



belief systems, rather than just masking or exploiting it, is to expand the widely-held belief system to include all levels of human experience. Only then can we turn stuck, jagged, southward directed energies around. Our hope rests in reversing their flow towards True North.

Mainstreaming correct information in the form of maps and methods is essential if we are to stop the process of escalating polarisation and restoring inner unity, the necessary precursor of world peace.

As an aside, albeit an extraordinarily important one: the—perhaps intentional—absence of correct maps and methods is directly related to corruption of Hubba Hubba's beloved language. What I call the Tower of Babel factor corrupts language and then thought. This, in turn, corrupts human decisions and thus poisons results on all levels.

### **Twin Dangers**

The hollow shell of empirical science which rules out the reality/existence of inner levels of experience generates two related and especially dangerous mistakes. The first is literalism, taking poetic symbolism at face value.

Here is a representation of the first mistake, literalism—separating intrinsically inter-related energetic pairs of natural opposites and putting them in unnatural opposition. Sexism and racism are among its symptoms. It results in an adversarial, either/or mentality, neither side respecting, accepting, or communicating with the other. It leaves both sides incomplete and unfulfilled.

The second mistake is an extension of the first. The second is confabulation, superimposing or substituting culturally conditioned non-equivalents for natural essences. The Chinese, for example, make a clear distinction between true yin and yang on the one hand and false yin and yang on the other. True yin and yang manifest as the natural differences between biological

males and females. False yin and yang include unnatural differences stemming from rigid, culturally-conditioned gender stereotypes.

Here's another example. Western psychologists talk about the unconscious mind in terms of it being a 'shadow' or 'dark' side. It is all too easy to slide from here into the mistake of equating the unknown, passive or yin valence with daemonic, unnatural evil.

In this, the Chinese view of energy centres, which they call *dan tiens*, is helpful. Each of the internal organs is associated with a specific set of emotions. When these emotions are harnessed, balanced, and harmonised as a whole, they are experienced as positive virtues. Out of balance, in states of either excess or deficiency, they manifest as negative emotions and produce physical illness.

For example, in balance, the positive virtues of the heart manifest as confidence and courage. Out of synchronisation, the heart expresses as harshness and cruelty, making the excessively cruel person prone to heart disease.

What is important here to establish is the correct definition of evil. The yin, subtle side of nature, is not evil. It is a necessary part of the whole. What *is* evil is any attempt to fragment, even destroy, the integrity of the life pattern itself. Variations of the Life Wheel represent levels that are out of synchronisation and disconnected. They are shown briefly in the earlier mentioned *Pra-buddha Bharata* article, so are not repeated here. A necessary first step in overcoming this second danger is to restore the Life Wheel to generally accepted awareness.

Put another way, it is difficult indeed to counter and correct escalating political polarisation when its underlying cause, false belief systems, are not recognised and remedied. In the creative process represented in the Life Wheel, first ideas trigger emotions. In turn, these lead to action. When the initial, causative ideas are false or incomplete,

they trigger negative emotions which in turn generate destructive behaviour. Therefore, to change destructive behaviour patterns, it is necessary to first replace the systems that generate them with a complete and correct one.

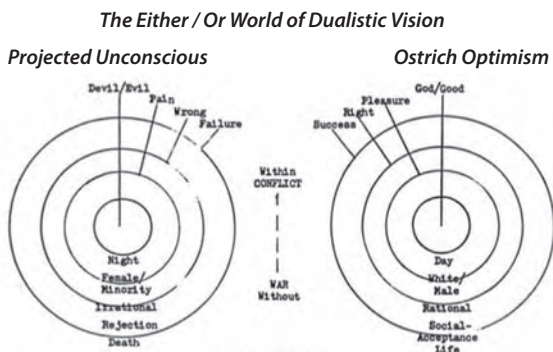
The first step towards positive change is to accept and live by correct belief ideas supported by useful methods, one person at a time, and from the inside out.

### Return to Simplicity

We chattering, hyper-intellectual but undisciplined mental monkeys too often block out conscious awareness of the inner levels of the Life Wheel. We dismiss the disciplines required to spin through the lower chakras, evolving towards the higher/deeper ones.

Western cultures have universal wisdom embedded in their teachings. But these roots are tacit and overlooked. To make matters worse, insincere leaders corrupt the language, thereby distorting the truth. This confuses the weak-minded. It seems as if academic, social/political theorists are devolving, trapped in the hollowness of empirical science, debasing human thought and behaviour to animal status.

People of simple faith enjoy a peace of mind forfeited by overeducated monkeys. Those deaf to conscience continue to chatter away—arguing, debating, theorising, and speculating, while quietness is required to enter through the higher gates.



This passage from *Jesus Calling* for the very day of this writing expresses the universal calling to stillness and the monkey mind's predicament, as well as the remedy:

The world has changed enormously since I first gave the command to *be still and know that I am God*. However, this timeless truth is essential for the well-being of your soul. ... A refreshed, revitalized mind is able to sort out what is important and what is not. In its natural condition, your mind easily gets stuck on trivial matters. Like the spinning wheels of a car trapped in the mud, the cogs of your brain spin impotently when you focus on a trivial thing. As soon as you start communicating with Me about the matter, your thoughts gain traction, and you can move on to more important things. Communicate with Me continually, and I will put My thoughts into your mind.<sup>9</sup>

Whirling dervishes spin to quiet and transcend the ordinary mind, cultivating stillness to enter into an altered state of higher consciousness. Similarly, the American Shaker community in Alfred, Maine used dance to shake off the dross of worldly stress. Elder Joseph Brackets wrote these words to the dance tune 'Simple Gifts' for this intentional community:

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free  
'Tis the gift to come down  
where we ought to be,  
And when we find ourselves  
in the place just right,  
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.  
When true simplicity is gained,  
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,  
To turn, turn will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning  
we come 'round right.<sup>10</sup>

The blessing hidden in an increasingly complex world is that, as a matter of survival, truth seekers are obliged to return to—and appreciate—the simple values in life. Of necessity, these survivors must build communities and train warrior-priests

like the Shaolin monks of old: fiercely competent lovers of principle and peace, motivated by the purpose to protect innocents, sustained by the will to survive Dark Age madness, and prevail.

### Conclusion

He knew a lot, my stoic grandpa Hubba Hubba. He knew more than he knew he knew. Though a simple, uneducated man, he loved language and taught his grandchildren to appreciate the importance of using words correctly. Grounded in his Native American origins, he knew the name of every plant in the forest. He kept a hand-crafted wood and bark canoe in the attic of his sagging barn. Yet he also worked many years as a foreman at the local asbestos plant, a job he despised, to put food on the table for his family.

His wife, my Grandma Ellie, called him simply 'Hub'. Small wonder. The word 'hub' is also used to signify the centre of a wheel.

I remember him best because, with his simple riddle, he planted a seed in my childish brain that bore fruit in my adult mind. He gave me the opportunity to access what he knew, then articulate it a bit better, thanks to his gift of careful words.

Hubba Hubba came to me in a dream while I was living in Germany, immersed both in string music and in reading Jung's memoir. Since it applies equally well to the world situation now, I pass on the warning he gave me. From *Rethinking Survival*: 'In another memorable dream, I spoke with my father's father, Hubble West—the one his grandkids nicknamed "Hubba Hubba", from whom I inherited my Native American looks. Gravely, he warned that I was trapped in a high-rise tower. I was dead and didn't know it.'<sup>11</sup>

I took this troubling message as a warning that important parts of me were atrophied. I was stuck in my head, neglecting my body, and failing to listen to my heart. As a result, I was in mortal danger. Later I learned that at the time

of the dream, Hub had just passed. This was his parting benediction.

This article could never have been written except for his simple fidelity to inner truth. May he smile on us now from above, gratified that his sacrifices were well worth the price, knowing that his grandchildren, following his example, are doing their best to pay his blessings, including warnings, forward.

This one's for you, Hubba Hubba, with love and gratitude.



### References

1. See Patricia West, 'As Conflict Escalates, What Can Be Done Now?', *Prabuddha Bharata*, 120/8 (August 2015), 502.
2. See Patricia West, 'Scientist & Sages Can Agree on This', *Rethinking Survival: Getting to the Positive Paradigm of Change*, 15 June 2014 <<https://rethinkingsurvival.com/2014/06/15/scientists-sages-can-agree-on-this/>> accessed 03 January 2018.
3. Patricia West, 'The KEY That Reconciles Science & Religion', *Rethinking Survival: Getting to the Positive Paradigm of Change*, 30 August 2017 <<https://rethinkingsurvival.com/2017/08/30/the-key-that-reconciles-science-religion>> accessed 15 January 2018.
4. *Mundaka Upanishad*, 1.1.3.
5. Matthew 5:48.
6. See The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'World tree', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/world-tree>> accessed 03 January 2018.
7. See Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1872), 104.
8. See Don Campbell, *The Mozart Effect: Tapping the Power of Music to Heal the Body, Strengthen the Mind, and Unlock the Creative Spirit* (New York: Quill, 2001).
9. Sarah Young, *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence* (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2015), 510.
10. Elder Joseph Brackett, *Simple Gifts*, 1848.
11. Patricia West, *Rethinking Survival: Getting to the Positive Paradigm of Change* (Madison WI: Positive Action, 2014.), 41.



# Beauty in the Traditional Metaphysical Perspective

Imad Jafar

God is Beautiful and He loves beauty—  
Prophet Muhammad  
The being of all things is derived from the Di-  
vine Beauty—St Thomas Aquinas

IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF the great religions and sapiential philosophies, all earthly beauty is understood to be nothing less than a finite manifestation of the infinite beauty of the Divine. In other words, the traditional doctrine of beauty proposes that all the beauty of our world—be it natural or ‘human-made’<sup>1</sup>—does nothing but partake of the Absolute beauty;<sup>2</sup> and this indeed explains why ancient human being’s role in creating a work of sacred art served as much a sacramental as an artistic purpose. This traditional theory of beauty teaches, moreover, that the greatest earthly beauty is the human figure—both female and male—for the Divinity crafted man, to use the phraseology of Genesis, in its ‘own image,’<sup>3</sup> a truth outlined in the Islamic tradition in the widespread Hadith: ‘God created Adam in his own form.’<sup>4</sup>

The author of the Dionysian corpus tells us that ‘the Beautiful’<sup>5</sup> is one of the sacred names of God, stating: ‘By the Beautiful all things are made one ... [for] the Beautiful is the origin of all things.’<sup>6</sup> Letting the Areopagite speak for the ancient metaphysical perspective as a whole, we can deduce from his words that the traditional theory asserts that the idea of beauty is one inseparable from the universal notion of divine Unity<sup>7</sup> or of non-duality more generally, wherein all multiplicity—all of the Absolute’s innumerable

aspects or names, of which the angels or *devas* are, as it were, the created personifications or embodiments—‘are made one’ by and in the glory of his ‘singular beauty’. The same principle occurs in the scripture of Islam: ‘God: there is no divinity save him! To him belong the most beautiful names!’<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the words of the Areopagite, the Quranic mention of ‘names’ implies a certain multiplicity or plurality, but all such diversity is understood as converging in the deity’s unity, namely, in its capacity as the one and only transcendent ‘beauty above all beauty.’<sup>9</sup>

In connection with this link between the notions of beauty and unity, it is also important to mention the following point: the traditional perspective understands the concept of beauty to be one that conveys above all a sense of order; and sees, moreover, in the oneness of the Divinity the ultimate symbol of such an order. Several of the Greek philosophers echoed this notion, but perhaps Plotinus was most explicit, when he stated that one should see ‘beauty everywhere and made to discern the One Principle underlying all’.<sup>10</sup> In the Christian context, St Ambrose implied much the same through his dictum, ‘All nature testifieth to the Unity of God’,<sup>11</sup> with the doctor’s use of the word ‘nature’ conveying the ideas of both beauty and order precisely because, according to orthodox Christian doctrine, ‘the universe [nature] ... cannot be better, because of the most beautiful order given to ... [it] by God’.<sup>12</sup>

The aforementioned notion of the Divine

being the source of all earthly beauty occurs in countless sacred doctrines. Dionysius the Areopagite stated that God is named 'Beauty' 'on account of the beauty transmitted from Himself to all beautiful things'<sup>13</sup> just as a Muslim saint no less than Jami taught that 'every beauty and perfection' is a reflection of 'his perfect beauty'.<sup>14</sup> To the words of these two men, we may add the Platonic dictum that it is the 'beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other beautiful things without itself suffering diminution or increase or any change'.<sup>15</sup> The same truth, moreover, is echoed by St Augustine, when he forthrightly declares that it is 'the Supreme God, whose Beauty is Unseen and Ineffable'<sup>16</sup> who reaches down to all 'these earthly things below' and allows them 'to silently proclaim ... the Ineffably and Invisibly Beautiful'<sup>17</sup> principle which is himself.<sup>18</sup>

Now, what is always closely tied to beauty in the traditional theory is the doctrine of Archetypes. As we said earlier, the 'imitation below of things above' allows one to partake of heaven's glory, and so it follows that every earthly thing must naturally have its origin in the infinite and innumerable attributes, functions, or aspects of the supreme Principle. Furthermore, the traditional doctrines affirm that the human being may get to know the latter by the former, 'for by the greatness of beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be known thereby'.<sup>19</sup> We need only quote three sources—though one could cite many more—in order to showcase the universality of the doctrine of Archetypes: 'Every shape you see has its Archetype in the heavenly world ... and if the shape perished, no matter, since the Original is everlasting'<sup>20</sup>; 'Earth containest all the things in an earthly manner that Heaven containest celestially'<sup>21</sup>; 'This world is the likeness of that (one)'.<sup>22</sup> This doctrine of the Divine as the Archetype of all beauty was, however, perhaps most clearly summarised by Philo, who said:

God is himself the perfection, and completion, and boundary of happiness, partaking of nothing else by which he can be rendered better, but giving to every individual thing a portion of what is suited to it, from the fountain of good, namely, from himself; for the beautiful things in the world would never have been such as they are, if they had not been made after an archetypal pattern, which was really beautiful, the uncreate, and blessed, and imperishable model of all things.<sup>23</sup>


The same truth, furthermore, is with the author of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, when he says: 'Know that all shapes and images which you see ... are mere semblances and copies of ... those Forms which are Eternal and which will never cease to be,'<sup>24</sup> these 'Forms' constituting nothing other than the immutable attributes of 'God ... the Ideal Form of the Beautiful and the Good'.<sup>25</sup>

Knowledge of God, or *gnosis*—Sanskrit, *jnana*—the Way of those authentic religious mysticisms which are *jnanic* rather than *bhaktic*—is also closely related to beauty in the traditional philosophy. 'If you seek the knowledge of God,' says the *Corpus Hermeticum*, 'you are also seeking the knowledge of the Beautiful' (*ibid.*). This innate link between beauty and knowledge manifests itself most clearly, of course, in the realm of sacred art, where it is only a precise knowledge of a given religion's orthodox doctrines, symbols, and canons of art that allows one to produce—and interpret—a work that is 'beautiful' in the truest sense of the word. As an example of one who adhered to this artistic rule, we may recall the words of the great Chinese monk and painter Tao-Chi, who said that it is only when the painter's 'intellect reaches the Origin of things' that his 'heart ... [becomes] inspired' and his 'work can then penetrate into the very essence'<sup>26</sup> of his subject matter, enabling him to produce a true work of *art* in the highest spiritual sense. In fact, many of the traditional doctrines of art—medieval Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and

Chinese, for example—posit that *knowledge* of the established rules of the art form is a fundamental prerequisite for any artist looking to begin work on a canonical image or inscription.<sup>27</sup> In other words, anything that does not correspond to the religion's orthodox doctrines and artistic canons, acquired through preparatory spiritual learning, is considered 'ugly,' for, as the Hindu tradition teaches, 'that which falls short of canonical proportion is not beautiful.'<sup>28</sup> Plato essentially says the same thing when he declares that one cannot 'give the name "art" to anything irrational,'<sup>29</sup> in other words to anything that is antithetical to the Divine Reason. The ancient Chinese perspective was the same, for it was one no less than Li Jin-Hua who said that the 'old painters' painted their works of art 'by natural inspiration ... [but] never contrary to Truth,'<sup>30</sup> namely to the Eternal Truth, which 'is the same now as it ever was, the same to be forevermore.'<sup>31</sup> This intrinsic link between man's thirst for divine knowledge and his pursuit of divine beauty is ultimately grounded, of course, in man's love for God, for, as John Smith the Platonist put it, it is our desire of 'divine knowledge [that] makes us amorous of divine beauty.'<sup>32</sup>

Another key aspect of the spiritual life that is very closely tied to the notion of beauty in the traditional perspective is virtue. Virtue, according to St Bernard of Clairvaux, aids the soul, effectively increasing the soul's 'heavenly beauty that is her birthright,' allowing her to adorn herself 'with all of the ... love that she deserves.'<sup>33</sup> In the Christian perspective, all virtue on a human being's part is by its very nature 'beautiful,' for it constitutes, like the use of one's intellect, an 'imitation below of things above.' Traditional civilisations sometimes looked upon 'beauty' and 'virtue' as being so closely linked so as to be almost conceptual synonyms for one another. In the Hebrew scriptures, for instance, one reads of the sages 'rich in virtue, studying beauty.'<sup>34</sup> That Cambridge Platonism underscored this same

link is evident from the words of Peter Sterry, who taught that 'the chief things of Beauty are Light and Proportion,' with one only living 'beautifully when this Light ... [ran] along [one's] thoughts, affections ... [and] actions.'<sup>35</sup>

We had begun this brief essay with a discussion on order and harmony. Concluding this work, we may add that proportion and order is often held in the *Philosophia Perennis*, perennial philosophy, to be the foundation stone of all earthly beauty. As we said earlier, in the realm of traditional sacred art, 'proportion and order' does *not* imply perfect symmetry or bodily depiction but, rather, a general conformity to the established canons of a particular sacred art form. It is only in these circumstances, then, that a work of art may indeed be considered 'beautiful' in the traditional sense, which is undoubtedly the sense that St Frances de Sales had in mind when he pertinently observed that it is only 'proportion and agreement in finished things [that] make true beauty!'<sup>36</sup> 

## Notes and References

1. 'Human-made' denoting works of art crafted with a higher purpose and on the basis of a divine model, as was the case, for example, with the Temple of Solomon. In traditional sacred art, it is usually 'in imitation of the angelic works of art that any work of art is wrought here' (*Aitareya Brahmana*, 6.27, cf. *Sankhayana Aranyaka*, 8.9 and Plotinus, *Enneads*, 5.9.11: 'There is this celestial harp: this human harp is a likeness of it'). Why? 'For that which falls short of canonical proportion is not beautiful' (*Shukranitisara*, 4.4.73). cf. Exodus 25:40, where Moses is told to craft the tabernacle not according to his own whims or imagination but 'according to the pattern which was shown ... on the Mount'.
2. According to Plotinus, 'the Good [*Πλάτων*] ... [is] at once the Fountain and Principal of all Beauty' (Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.9).
3. Genesis 1:26–7, 5:1–2; For later Christian elucidations of this doctrine, see Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos*, 15; Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, 3; and St Anselm, *Proslogion*, 1.



4. Cf. Hermes Trismegistus, *Corpus Hermeticum*, 'Poimandres', 1.12: 'Man was very goodly to look on, bearing the likeness of his Father.'
5. This is the Islamic *Al-Badi*, as used in Quran 2.117 and 6.101.
6. Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, 4.7.
7. Islamic *tawhid*.
8. Quran 20.8, 7.180.
9. St Catherine of Sienna, *The Dialogue*.
10. *Enneads* 1.3.2.
11. St Ambrose, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, 1.4.1; cf. *Isha Upanishad*, 6,8; *Katha Upanishad*, 2.20; *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, 2.16, 3.3; Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 1.4.18; St Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.2; Quran, 17.44, 57.3.
12. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.48.1, 1.25.6–3; cf. Quran, 10.4, 64.3.
13. *On the Divine Names*, 4.7.
14. Nur-Ud-Din Abd Jami, *Lawa'ih*, 5; cf. Quran 7.32: 'Who hath forbidden the beautification (*zinata*, literally 'adornment' or 'ornamentation') of God which he hath brought forth for his bondmen, and is among the good things of his bounty?'
15. Plato, *Symposium*; cf. Plato, *Phaedo*. That the Divine is never in a state of change or flux is a universal metaphysical doctrine. To agree with the doctrine is to rhetorically ask with Heraclitus: 'How can one hide from that which *never* sets?' (*The Fragments Of Heraclitus*, 16, τὸ μὴ δύνόν ποτε πῶς ἂν τις λάθοι; cf. Quran, 6.76, where Abraham cries that he 'loveth not things that set', which implicitly underscores the notion that the Divine, unlike natural phenomena, never vanishes). Cf. Prakashananda, *Siddhantamuktavali*, 44: '[He is] Primordial and present witness'; J Rumi, *Mathnawi*, 1.133: 'The Sufi is the Son of the Moment ... it is not the rule of the Way to say "To-morrow"'; and Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Top Classic Poetry*, 'Paradiso', 17.17: 'The Point whereto all times are present'.
16. St Augustine, *City of God*, 10.14; For more Christian references to the 'Ineffable' aspect of the Divine, see Origen, *De Principiis*, 1.5; St Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 14: 'The supreme remoteness of the Father is really inconceivable' (cf. St Basil, *Hexaemeron*, 2.1); St Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.4; Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names*, 1.2 (cf. Dionysius The Areopagite, *Letter to Gaius Therapeutes*: 'If any one, having seen God, understood what he saw, then he did not see him, but (rather saw) one of his creatures that is existing and knowable'; and Angelus Silesius, *Cherubic Wanderer*, 5.41, 124.
17. *City of God*, 11.4.
18. Moreover, let us not forget the timeless words of St Hilary of Poitiers: 'Surely the Author of all created beauty must Himself be the Beauty of all beauty' (St Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, cited in Judith and Michael Fitzgerald, *Christian Spirit* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004), 39; cf. *ibid.*, 64, where the authors quote St Anthony of Padua's famous saying: 'If things created are so full of loveliness, how resplendent with beauty must be the One who made them!'). Cf. St Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.12; William Law: 'All that is sweet, delightful, amiable in this world ... is nothing else but Heaven breaking through the veil of this world' (*Selected Mystical Writings of William Law*, ed. Stephen Hobbhouse (London: C W Daniel, 1938), 44).
19. Wisdom 13:5; cf. Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos*, 4: 'Him we know from His creation.'
20. Rumi, *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, 12.
21. Proclus, *Commentary on Timaeus of Plato*.
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24. *Corpus Hermeticum*, 'De Castigatione Anime', 1.6.
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27. In the words of Democrates, 'neither art [or beauty] nor wisdom [or knowledge] can be acquired without preparatory learning' (Democrates, *The Golden Sentences*, 25).
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34. Ben Sira, *Sirach*, 44.3–7.
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# ***Religious Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Narayana Guru***

**Betty Sunny**



**R**ELIGION OCCUPIES the most important part of the life of human beings and it is the chief differentiating characteristic of a human being. Religion indicates what is highest in a human being and lifts a person in some way to the universe, or the infinite and eternal, of which one is a part. Religion aims chiefly at creating a refined way of life. It satisfies the inward craving of a person who is leading an animated life and wishes to attain a spiritual consolation, solace, and peace. The aim of religion is the factual realisation of the harmony between the aspiring soul and the integrating principle.

Religion is considered to be the binding force which binds an individual to a definite chain and unites the individuals. But in the present scientific age, the value of religion is being ignored by many who try to underrate its importance.

Many contemporary thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, S Radhakrishnan, and Sri Narayana Guru had presented religion according to their views. The study of their views will enable the growing generation to understand the strength and greatness of their religious ideas. This article limits its scope to only two of the

contemporary thinkers, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Narayana Guru.

Swamiji and Narayana Guru were the spiritual emancipators of India. They took inspiration from the Indian philosophical traditions, especially Vedanta. On the basis of which they presented a new design for life: a model contentment, compassion, balance, and harmony. Both of them accepted religion as one of the most important aspects of human life.

Both of them tried to base a religion on the rational ground by accepting reason as the final guide even in the field of religion and the aim of religion as realisation. One of the most important things in these two rishis is that they conducted and participated in religious conferences. The religious ideas of these two rishis suggest some new ideas and could throw new light on religious concepts.

## ***Religious Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda***

More than any other Hindu religious leader of the modern era, with the exception of Mahatma Gandhi, Swamiji is famous in the Western world for his eloquent defence of Hinduism and his

charismatic personality. He was a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He practised intense spiritual disciplines under the supervision of Sri Ramakrishna for several years. Swamiji's life was short; some months short of forty. Within this short span of life, he left a rich legacy of spectacular achievements in the religious and cultural history of the world.

Swamiji had realised that no religion in the world was as liberal and catholic as Hinduism. In his response to the welcome given at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, Swamiji said: 'I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true'.<sup>1</sup> In his conversation with the educated West on the various aspects of religion, he upholds the Vedantic tradition and attempts to defend Hinduism and its continuing contribution to the spiritual life of the world. Like his master Sri Ramakrishna, he also emphasised the unity of all essential goals of all religions. 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee' (4).

He explains that religion does not consist in erecting temples or building churches or attending public worship. As well as it cannot be found in books, words, lectures, or organisations. Religion is realisation. Religion does not consist in subscribing to a particular creed or faith but in spiritual realisation. So, spiritual realisation is religion. He said: 'I shall try to bring before you the Hindu theory that religions do not come from without, but from within. It is my belief that religious thought is in man's very constitution, so much so that it is impossible for him to give up religion until he

can give up his mind and body, until he can give up thought and life' (3.1). Religion is inseparable from humans and their lives. It is within every human being.

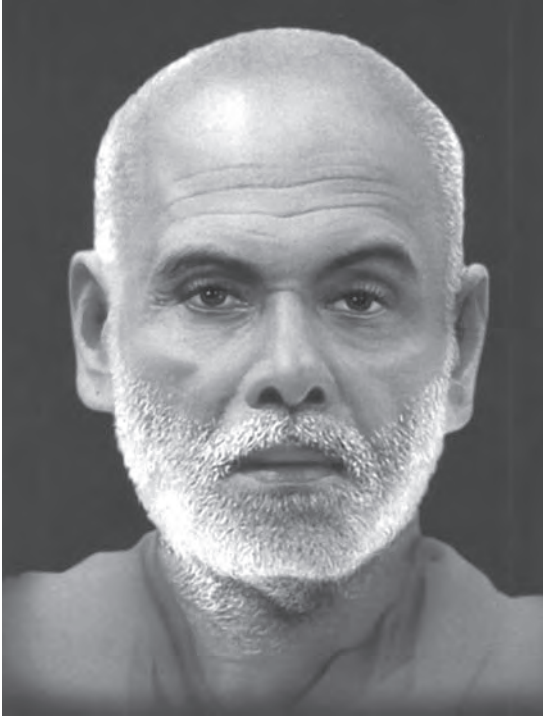
Each and every one should understand God within their soul through self-realization. ... It is realization in the heart of our hearts. It is touching God; it is feeling God and realizing that I am a spirit in relation with the universal Spirit and all its great manifestations. In a simple manner, his way of understanding of religion is that man must realize God, feel God, see God, and talk to God. That is the religion. To him material prosperity and wealth is not an important thing. But the wealth of the spiritual thought in brain that is needed to the human progress.<sup>2</sup>

### **Universal Religion**

Swamiji also looks at the various religious traditions from a pragmatic point of view. For him, various religions represent human being's spiritual struggles over social struggles that are represented in different nations by different social organisations. As long as the world exists, the different world religions will also continue to exist. The differences between various world religions are good for all human beings. 'Thinking beings must differ; difference is the first sign of thought. If I am a thoughtful man, certainly I ought to like to live amongst thoughtful persons where there are differences of opinion'.<sup>3</sup>

Swamiji emphasised the concept of 'Universal Religion', but he never developed that idea into a cohesive theory. He addressed himself to the apparently contradictory nature of world religions. He believed that in essence, they are not contradictory but supplementary. 'Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore, addition, not exclusion' (ibid.). All religions are different forces in the economy of





*Sri Narayana Guru (c. 1856–1928)*

God, working for the good of all, and not one can be destroyed.

Swamiji did not believe in a future universal religion, but in a universal religion which is already existing and in which each world religion comprises one inseparable part. This universal religion about which philosophers and others have dreamt in every country already exists. It is here, as the universal brotherhood of human beings. Swamiji emphasised the fraternity of all religions in the past, present, and future through this universal religion. He accepts all religions in the past and worships with them all. He worships God with every one of them. He says we stand in the present but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past; enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future.

According to Swamiji, there are two modern

theories of religion. They are the spirit theory of religion and the evolution of the idea of the infinite. The former upholds ancestor worship as the beginning of religious ideas whereas for the latter; religion originates in the personification of the power of nature. To Swamiji, human being gets the first glimpse of religion through dreams. In the dream, when the body is apparently dead, the mind will function. The mental works will continue even after the dissolution of the body. This according to Swamiji is a more natural explanation of the supernatural. Through this dream idea, the human mind rises to the higher conceptions. The religious prophets reach a state of mind, which is neither waking nor sleeping but experience a new series of facts in the spiritual kingdom.

Swamiji declared that all the controversies about religious truths were the results of ignorance. All religions in this world were different paths for reaching the same goal. Through various paths, all religions try to realise the same reality in their own ways. It was the privilege of Swamiji to speak the truth of Vedanta on the platform of the World Parliament of Religions and it was also the fortune of the West to hear the spiritual truths realised by Indian seers.

He realised the fact that religion was the inner heart of India. He firmly believed that the existence of India can be saved only by preserving its religion and spirituality. He declared that 'In each nation, as in music, there is a main note, a central theme, upon which all others turn. Each nation has a theme: everything else is secondary. India's theme is religion' (5.210). Swamiji wanted to break all barriers between religions and remove all conflicts and oppositions. Religion must be limitless and infinite like God.

Thus the religious teachings of Swamiji are quite useful because these provide human beings

with precious gems by means of which one can better one's individuality. Swamiji's fundamental teaching is the doctrine of the oneness of existence. This doctrine is the cure of all evils in individual, social, national, and international fields. A peaceful interpersonal relationship can be established by practising this doctrine. His teachings are much useful for India as well as for the entire world even today.

### **Religious Philosophy of Sri Narayana Guru**

Sri Narayana Guru was a wisdom teacher of India whose life followed the ancient and immemorial pattern of oriental saints and prophets. His basic stand was that of a non-dualist Vedantic visionary. This made it possible for him to appreciate the value elements of all traditions and to view all religions with the attitude of a devoted lover of beauty, goodness, and truth. Hence his philosophy is at once traditional and modern, as well as scientific and religious; which makes it all comprehensive, universal, and unitive.

Narayana Guru uses the terms *arivu*, Atman, Brahman, and God synonymously to denote the one ultimate Reality. Guru defines God as *satyam*, *jnanam*, *ananda*—truth, knowledge, and happiness. God alone exists; all that appear as forming the world are simply manifestations of the one God. Guru installed various deities such as *Vinayaka*, *Shiva*, *Devi*, *Subramaniam*, and so on, in the temples and composed hymns in praise of them. His praising many gods does not mean that he admits to more than one God. Guru sees many gods as representing the one Brahman or *arivu*. Guru's view on religion is elucidated through his works such as *Atmopadesha Shatakam*, *Arivu*, *Darshanamala*, *Daiva Dashakam*, *Advaita Dipika*, and *Brahmavidya Panchakam*.

Individuals always do everything for

self-happiness. Religion is not meant for the welfare of the inner world of the human being alone. Physical and spiritual betterment should result from religion. The founders of all religions have aimed at realising the Absolute. Their faith, therefore, is one itself and not more. Speaking about religion, Guru once said, 'Which be the religion, it suffices if it makes a better man'. Therefore, it can be argued that Narayana Guru left the choice of religion with the people and their individual tastes, depending on whether it would make them good people in the world. Guru says: All religions aim at one thing when rivers join the sea they lose their separateness. The function of all religions is to turn the hearts of people upward and onward. When that is accomplished they will discover the truth for themselves. Here we refer to some stanzas of *Atmopadesha Shatakam*:

#### **The One Religion of the Guru**

Of all closed static groupings in society the one most fraught with danger to man is the formation of rival religions on a relativist, dualist basis. Conflicts become possible under such conditions. When what contributed to such a life of internal strife within men in the formation of wrongly motivated religious groups is once discovered and eliminated from religious life; all falls into unity, by analogous tendencies becoming revealed in different groups or religious formations.

Moses and Jesus differ in their outlook as also the Old Testament from the New Testament, through the value-sets implied in each. Vedism likewise differs from Vedantism. Analogously, on the other hand, the obligatory aspect represented by the Ten Commandments can be found in the Pentateuch as well as in the Christian Bible. Taboos and bans prevail here and there, overtly or tacitly, in all religions, and exclusive fanaticisms are possible in every case where orthodoxies might clash against rival

orthodoxies.’ The delicate way of Wisdom in their matter is discussed by the Guru in Verses 44 to 49, inclusive which we shall examine here.

In order to be able to lay bare the philosophical implications of the One Religion that is in the mind of the Guru, let us read this sequence of six verses in a selected order of our own. The topic covered by each can be enumerated as follows:

**(A) All Religions have the  
Overall Aim of Happiness**

All religions, when viewed horizontally as different from others in expression reveal many features that make for contrast. When we take a verticalized inclusive or contemplatively dialectical view of all religions understood together, a mutual agreement or transparency of context reveals itself between them, because the overall aim and end of all religions, however diverse, is none other than happiness in life, here or hereafter, or both. Verse 49 enunciates this unequivocally as follows:

Every man at every time makes effort in every  
way  
Self-Happiness to secure, thus in the world  
Know there is this One Religion alone, known  
thus and  
Avoiding evil, one should his inner self attune.

**(B) The Deep Mutual Adoption implied  
in Religious Affiliation**

...

The possibility of adopting a religion as one’s own is itself, as the Guru points out, only a recognition of the homogenous parity in the participation of the self and the non-self factors involved. By itself this possibility belongs to the pure Self, and when understood in such a pure perspective, is fully dignified and conducive to Self-realization. The danger, however, is that this pure nature of bipolar adoption becomes misapplied. Then *adhyasa* or superimposition mutually of non-Self factors on the self and vice-versa takes

place. Herein alone the danger lurks. We read in verse 48:

The dweller within the body, from its own status  
as pure being,  
In respect of each possible thing, treats all  
As ‘that is mine’ or ‘this is mine’ transcending  
bodily sense,  
All are in reality realized, when we think of what  
this means. ...

**(C) Rival Religions Really Plead  
for the Same Value**

We see that the protagonists of any religion dream of uniting all humanity under one faith. ... Hindus might want the entire world to become Hindu and so on. If each religious zealot only realized that, in this kind of plea, all sailed in the same boat, rival antagonisms could be minimized. This travesty implicit in the unwise rivalry between religious groups such as Unitarians and Trinitarians, causing much trouble that can be avoided, is alluded to with telling effect in Verse 47.

All plead but for one religion to prevail,  
Which the disputants fail to remember withal,  
Those wise ones freed from disadoption of another’s faith  
Can know here wholly the secret of all this.

**(D) The Nature of the Irony  
Implicit in Religious Rivalry<sup>4</sup>**

Many religions in their content are essentially one. Those who argue for against any particular religion are compared to the well-known story of a few blind men seeing an elephant—the one who feels the elephant’s leg claims that the elephant looks like a pillar; the other who feels its tail says, it is broom-like; the third feeling the ears, asserts that the elephant is like a winnowing fan in shape. None of them is wrong, but none of them is right either. What each acquires is simply a partial knowledge and this always allows room for disputations. So it is with the defenders of religions as well. One religion becomes respectable



and another despicable only because of the partial understanding of religion each one has. To quote the Guru's own words:

Ignoring that in substance various religions are the same,  
Like the blind men in respect of an elephant,  
fools wander  
In this world, imitate not their way,  
And not agitated like them, one should calmly settle down! (132).

It is not possible to defeat any religion through fighting, for every religion has for its strength at its core the high-value factor that makes it a religion. One religion attacking another, for this very reason, results not in the destruction of the targeted religion, but only of the persons who fight. The discriminating, therefore, always keep themselves away from such fights.

Verse 45 stresses the need to see the underlying unity of religions. ...


One religion is not good enough for another  
and the doctrine cardinal  
Stated in one, according to another's calculations is found defective,  
Until that day the unitive secret herein is known with certitude  
There shall continue to be confusion prevailing in this world. ...

Verse 46 underlines the fact that persecution only makes unilateral faith firmer. The martyrs to any deep belief prove the irony of the situation in the history of any religion and this is contrary to what might be expected by mechanistic reasoning. ...

Victory by flight is impossible here, one as against one,  
No religion by fighting gets exterminated, not knowing this  
The opponent of a stranger faith,  
His own doom shall be in vain fight for, beware! ...

The apocalyptic touch of the last line above gives a prophetic touch to the Guru's philosophy (133).

## Conclusion

Swamiji and Guru have the same opinion that religion was not theoretical but can be applied in daily life. They gave a practical demonstration of Advaita in real life. The unique trend of their philosophies is that religion was brought down from the whimsical heights to the midst of the masses. In their views, we have seen a lot of similarities and slight differences. But their formation of a new ideal of universal religion and one religion can be called universal love or universal brotherhood. It has given an equal value for all the religions of the world, as they truly exist. Their identification of truth was absolute and scientific, and they showed that religion can be practised by each and everybody. They made all understand that it is not necessary to have a vast literary knowledge, but the practice—it is very much needed. Therefore, it can be applied to all nations, all societies, and individuals. It is the harmony of all religions and one of the best solutions for the prevalent religious conflicts in the world, and to make the people aware that essentially all religions are one and the same. 

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# BALABODHA

*Ancient Wisdom Made Easy*

## Yoga

**Y**OGA IS A COMMONLY USED Sanskrit word, particularly in recent times, when it has caught the interest of the entire world. Different practices are popular in the name of 'yoga' and thus, it is very important to know the meaning of this word. This is a Sanskrit word. Sanskrit is a classical language like Greek, Latin, and Persian. And in Sanskrit, as in most classical languages, most words are derived from a stem or root.

The word 'yoga' has been derived from the root word *yuj*, which means to yoke, join, fasten, harness, make ready, prepare arrange, fit out, set to work, use, employ, apply, offer, perform, put on, fix in, insert, inject, appoint to, charge or entrust with, command, enjoin, turn, direct, fix, concentrate, unite, recall, recollect, connect, add, bring together, confer, and bestow upon. The word 'yoga' means yoking, joining, attaching, harnessing, putting to, a yoke, team, vehicle, conveyance, employment, use, application, performance, equipping, arraying, fixing, putting on, remedy, cure, means, expedient, device, way, manner, method, supernatural means, charm, incantation, magical art, trick, stratagem, fraud, deceit, undertaking, business, work, acquisition, gain, profit, wealth, property, occasion, opportunity, junction, union, combination, and contact.

Yoga is also one of the six systems of Indian philosophy that accept the authority of the Vedas. This system was propounded by Patanjali, who defines 'yoga' as the cessation of the thoughts that occur in the mind. His system of philosophy lays down a systematic path—'yoga' can also

mean a path or system—to completely control the mind and get rid of all thoughts. Yoga can also mean the various exercises or asanas that are prescribed as part of the disciplining of the body under a system called Hatha Yoga, which can be translated as 'forceful yoga'. Many postures of the body are prescribed under this system for the healthy maintenance and purification of the body so that a person can perform the Patanjali's system of yoga aimed at controlling the mind.

The word 'yoga' can also mean a system or path to attain something and probably that is why every chapter of the Bhagavadgita is called a 'yoga'. Swami Vivekananda culled four important paths from the Gita and other scriptures and called them each 'yoga': Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga. Yoga can also mean a gathering or meeting of people. It can also mean the union of the individual self with the supreme Self. This word can also mean tying together the strands of the mind. Yoga can also mean concentration.

Yoga is generally seen as a composite and complete method to gain mastery over one's body and mind. Such mastery enables one to achieve greatness both at the secular and spiritual levels. This is why even the performance of a Vedic sacrifice is called 'yoga'. In whichever way this word is interpreted it points to a path of transcending the ephemeral or temporary to attain a more real and permanent status, or more pointedly, to attain one's true unchanging state of personality. Seen in this sense, every practice of yoga, however unconnected they may seem, converge on a spiritual quest.



# TRADITIONAL TALES

## *The Plight of the Sins that are Washed in Ganga*

ONCE, A GREAT MONK visited the holy city of Varanasi. Seeing him coming to her for bathing, River Ganga told to herself with joy: 'This great monk is about to bathe in me.' However, her joy did not last long. Approaching the River Ganga, the great monk observed drain water falling into the river. This caused aversion in him and he gave up the idea of bathing in Ganga and returned.

River Ganga was dismayed seeing the great monk thinking something for a while and returning without having a bath. She took the form of a girl and asked the monk: 'O Lord! Why are you returning without bathing in the Ganga?'

The monk replied: 'O child! Ganga is flowing with the burden of the sins of people who bathe in her. As though it was not enough, I saw the refuse of all these sinners also mixing into Ganga through drains. I have no desire to bathe in Ganga which carries such detestable sins.'

Ganga told the monk: 'O Lord! The sins of those bathing in Ganga and the refuse that comes through drains will not touch those who bathe in the Ganga. Every moment, she brings fresh water from the Himalayas and dumps the old water into the ocean. Therefore, the sins that you mention go to the ocean alone. And so, your returning without bathing, thinking that the sins will reach you, is not right.'

The monk felt Ganga's reply was odd. He was also curious to find out the truth of her words. Therefore, he reached Gangasagar, the place where River Ganga meets the ocean. He stood

before the ocean and said: 'O the king of oceans! River Ganga brings to you all the sins that she carries. That means all the sins are dumped on you. If someone bathes in you, who has all these sins, will not they get all the sins?'

The ocean king appeared before the monk and said with folded hands: 'No, my lord! The sins do not remain with me. All of them are evaporated by the sun. Hence, anyone bathing in me will not get any sin.'

Hearing this reply, the monk's curiosity to know what happens to all these sins increased. He chanted the Gayatri Mantra and made the sun-god appear before him. He asked the sun-god, who was standing respectfully before him: 'O sun-god! You evaporate all the sins from the ocean. Doesn't that mean that you too are party to all these sins?'

The sun-god replied: 'O Lord! I have nothing to do with all those sins. All I do here is give and take. What I bring from the ocean is drunk by the clouds with pleasure. Puffed up, they go and stay in the Himalayas. Hence, the sins go to the clouds.'

The monk told to the clouds that were passing by: 'O clouds! Are you not ashamed to carry sins without caring for your honour?'

The clouds laughed through heavy thunder, as though they were showing their teeth to the monk, and said: 'O Lord! What is there to be ashamed of in our actions? We have been appointed only for serving the people. We act just as vehicles to carry whatever, good or bad, our master dumps on us. Sins or merits of people



do not affect us. We do not retain them. We are just now about to pour as rain whatever people have given us, without keeping to ourselves even a drop of that! Whatever we carry is accepted by Mother Earth as rainwater. Hence, the sins that we carry reach Mother Earth. She bears it in the form of rainwater.' Saying thus, the clouds started raining torrentially.

As there was rain, there grew plants, crops, and trees on the earth. The monk next called upon Mother Earth and asked: 'O Earth! Is all this greenery that grows on you the result of sins or the result of merits? If they are the result of sins, then is it you, who has the sins?'

Mother Earth, who was listening to the monk with folded hands and bowed head, said: 'O Lord! I don't know whether sins or merits cause the greenery to grow on me. People enjoy the plants, crops, trees, and vines according to the results of their actions. And, they dump on me, the waste that is generated. I continue to do my duty by taking the waste to River Ganga, who is an embodiment of compassion.'

The monk was perplexed and confused. Who else could he ask for answers? When he returned in a confused state to the banks of Ganga, River Ganga approached him as before, in the form of a girl. The monk told her: 'O child! Though ignorant of what was truly happening, you told me something that occurred to you. But, what you said does not match with the reality. I enquired all, from the ocean king to Mother

Earth, regarding the plight of the sins of people. The sins that are dumped in the Ganga go in a cycle and return to Ganga itself. Is this cycle that which is called the universe? I am unable to understand anything.'

At this question of the monk, River Ganga returned to her true form, giving up the guise of a girl, and said: 'O Lord! All the sins that people commit move like a wheel and reach me and Mother Earth. This has become a great torture to me and Mother Earth. Great saints like you alone can free us from this misery. The glory of the saints is unparalleled. Our sins not only do not touch the saints, but sins vanish because of the presence of the saints. When a true saint comes and bathes in me, the sins that I carry reduce to a great extent and I get a great relief. Just like a log of wood loses its form and turns into ash when put into raging fire, similarly, the sins of people that I carry are burnt when a great saint like you bathes in me. Any act like walking, thinking, talking, eating, and sleeping of a true saint like you greatly reduces the number of sins that are dumped on Mother Earth, because of the holiness of the saints. Hence, I and Mother Earth eagerly wait for the company of great saints like you. True saints are indeed, best gods, who help us.'

River Ganga's reply explained the plight of sins and cleared the monk's confusion. He bathed in Ganga with joy, upon which, Ganga was delighted greatly.



# REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,  
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



## **The Immortal Tales**

A D Bhattacharya

Srikunj Sadbhavana Manch, 'Srikunj',  
F-52, Bali Nagar, New Delhi 110015.  
2010. ₹120. viii + 131 pp. PB. ISBN  
9788182650152.

The book under review is a collection of forty-eight delightful tales drawn mainly from Hindu religious literature and classical works and rendered, in certain cases, with some slight modifications. Tales have ever been the surest means of driving home lofty spiritual and ethical lessons even to minds impervious to serious but beneficial messages. In a deep sense, tales, fables, and parables may be considered magnifying lenses capable of enlarging and clarifying subtle messages embedded in our ancient scriptures. The resourceful author has employed this technique skilfully to underscore and orchestrate certain wholesome messages. It is irrelevant to engage in any inquiry regarding the source from which the themes of the tales have been taken. In Sri Ramakrishna's luminous analogy, a wise person would get busy with the eating of luscious mangoes in a garden rather than counting them.

These short tales convey such fruitful messages as the glory of the virtue of forgiveness, the greatness of dispassion, the importance of the renunciation of ego, the need for absolute faith, practice of generosity as the key to lasting happiness, boundlessness of divine grace, non-duality of the Divine, the preceptor's infinite grace, the inscrutability of divine ways, worship of the Lord's feet, the power of the divine name, freedom from the vice of malice, absence of enmity in God, futility of ritual sans devotion, efficacy of sincere prayers, God's all-encompassing nature, the reputation of God as the purloiner of pure hearts, a true devotee's solicitude for God, firmness of faith as a bulwark in crisis, identification with the Self as the infallible means of overcoming psycho-physical

pains, Sri Krishna's skill in stratagem, the virtue of detachment, fickleness of the mind, the need for single-minded concentration, the bane of blind adherence to customs, equal validity of the ways of bhakti and jnana, the need to tell the truth at the right time, absence of self-conceit, music as key to divine bliss, immanence of God, evil of malevolence, the virtue of selflessness, the human body as the tabernacle of God, the need to work and earn, devotional music as the royal road to the attainment of God, power of total surrender to God, the touch of the divine person as a force for salutary metamorphosis, prayer for liberation, the value of a bitter pill, encouragement to the deserving, immutability and immortality of Brahman, redundancy of publicity for purity, and the innate tendency of children to utter even the bitter truth.

This slim book makes an absorbing read and is bound to fascinate all, particularly young minds. It represents a welcome tactical move to inculcate lofty virtues in impressionable minds through the time-tested device of storytelling.

N Hariharan  
Madurai



## **Swami Saradananda, 'The Great One' Unfolds Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga** Vijay Kaskhedikar

'Sri Ramakrishna-Shivananda Matru  
Dham', 4-5, Pendhri, Sri Narayan  
Nagar, Amaravati Road, Waddhamna,  
Tehsil Hingna, District Nagpur,  
Maharashtra 440023. 2010. ₹50. viii  
+ 131 pp. PB.

The precious contents of the slim book under review constitute an insightful annotation, as it were, by an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, of selected portions of *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga*, the Bengali magnum opus of Swami Saradananda, 'The Great One', who was one of

the direct monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. The book explores some of the unique spiritual moods and experiences of the Master in fourteen short sections and studies their significance and import for the benefit of the community of seekers. The author calls his short monograph a 'loud meditation' on the teachings he has imbibed from Swami Shivatatvananda, the expositor of *Lilaprasanga*. The book is essentially an attempt by the author 'to understand "Bhavamukh" a super-conscious state in which Sri Ramakrishna always remained'. According to the author, the deep inquiry into the recondite messages of *Lilaprasanga* is verily a sadhana. *Lilaprasanga* is not a pedestrian recital of the life-story of Sri Ramakrishna but a vivid description of the esoteric moods behind his each and every action.

A non-descript priest for all outward appearance, the Master is an embodiment of supersensuous consciousness of Non-duality. This state of his abidance in undifferentiated, homogeneous transcendental consciousness, technically known as *nirvikalpa* samadhi, is the peak of spiritual realisation. The Master is not only a consummate knower of Brahman, an intrepid subduer of the trickeries of duality but also an epitome of infinite compassion. But the exercise of the supreme virtue of compassion is possible only in a dualistic temper. The logical answer to this ticklish problem is *bhavamukha*, the threshold state which is characterised by the predominance of non-dualistic consciousness tempered by a faint tinge of dualistic temper. But for his voluntary assumption of *bhavamukha* in which a faint sense of egoism lingers to enable him to do his unparalleled spiritual ministrations to the world, the Master would have been a statuesque knower of Brahman tranquilly revelling in his transcendental stage of Brahman realization, *nirvikalpa* samadhi. It is the twilight zone of *bhavamukha*, in which the Master chooses to ever remain to impart to perplexed humanity eternal spiritual teachings that are the burden of the song of this slim book.

The need to have a meditative mood and prayerful attitude to assimilate the pearls of wisdom emanating from the Master in his *bhavamukha* state, the prerequisite of a spirit of absolute surrender for the sadhana to be undertaken, the

prominent physical expressions that surface in the Master while in a state of *bhavamukha*, keen consciousness of absolute Reality as the effacer of misery, the obstacle of latent tendencies to spiritual progress, chanting of divine names as the infallible means of conquering lust, the need to eschew attachment, *bhavamukha* as a lofty state beyond the consciousness of man-woman differentiation, the need to transcend even Personal-God-consciousness as a precondition to the consciousness of absolute Reality, steadfastness for the goal, the redundancy of miracles and visions, intense renunciation, unflinching faith and conviction about the Truth as hallmarks of spiritual progress, *savikalpa* samadhi—a state anterior to the ultimate state of *nirvikalpa* samadhi, uniqueness of avatars, the amazing prescience of the Master, various spiritual moods, the practice of Kundalini Yoga, the inadequacy of *paroksha*, mediate knowledge, the necessity for *aparoksha*, immediate experience, the spiritual alchemy of the fusion of self-effort and self-surrender, the Master's unique capacity for universal consciousness and identification, the supremacy and inviolability of divine will, his formidable spiritual prowess by which his thoughts get instantaneously actualised, the disciplines of concentration and meditation, the attitude towards the chosen deity not as a separate entity but as a manifestation of the absolute Reality—all these and a host of other spiritual verities figure in the absorbing narrative as instructive corollaries of the study of the Master's unprecedented state of *bhavamukha*, which is a veritable spiritual feat performable only by the sturdiest of spiritual stalwarts. To remain anchored in the transcendental plane of consciousness and also to have a mild brush with relative consciousness for altruistic reasons is a spiritual exploit possible only for the Master as spiritual persons of lesser stature are sure to be pulled down and buried into the quagmire of relativity by even a whiff of relative consciousness.

What stands out in the book is the author's intense devotional fervour that pervades the narrative. The book is a window to have a satisfying survey of the wondrous spiritual landscape of *bhavamukha*, a rare spiritual discovery of the Master.

N Hariharan



# MANANA

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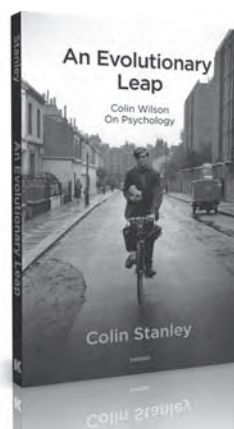
## **An Evolutionary Leap: Colin Wilson On Psychology**

Colin Stanley

Karnac Books Ltd, 118 Finchley Road, London NW3 5HT. 2016. xvi + 123 pp. \$26.96. PB. ISBN 9781782204442.

COLIN WILSON'S CONTRIBUTION to the field of psychology is much underrated and although it owes a debt to his association with Abraham Maslow (1908–1970)—in particular his concept of ‘peak experiences’ (PEs), which assured Wilson that we *can*, and frequently *do*, rise above the ‘triviality of everydayness’ and access a heightened form of consciousness (albeit briefly)—many of his ideas in this field had already been formulated before the one became aware of the other's work. Indeed, it was Maslow, then a professor at Brandeis University, who made the initial contact, writing to Wilson in 1963, after reading his *The Age of Defeat* (aka *The Stature of Man* in the US), published in 1959: ‘He explained that he had been impressed with the optimism of *The Stature of Man*, and about the way I had pinpointed the sense of defeat that permeated our culture ...’, Wilson wrote in his autobiography *Dreaming to Some Purpose*.

Maslow has apparently come to have doubts about Freud's sexual theory. Wilson commented: ‘This is something I had felt strongly for years: Freud's view that all our deepest urges are sexual seemed to me to leave out some of the most important members of the human race, from Leonardo to Bernard Shaw ...’ A correspondence struck up between them during which Maslow sent Wilson a selection of his papers:



What fascinated me most about the Maslow material was his remark that, as a psychologist, he had got tired of studying sick people because they talked about nothing but their sickness. So he looked around for the healthiest people he could find, and studied them instead. And he quickly made an interesting discovery: all his healthy subjects had, with a fair degree of frequency, moments of sudden immense happiness. He came to call these ‘peak experiences’ (or PEs). The peak experience was not necessarily mystical in the religious sense—just a sudden overflowing of sheer joy ad vitality.

Clearly impressed, Wilson wrote to Maslow on 8 July 1964 enclosing an eleven-page essay on Maslow's work intended to be the conclusion to a book he was writing: *The Anatomy of Human Greatness*, a summary of his six ‘Outsider Cycle’ books. The essay, labelled ‘Maslow and the peak experience’, commenced: ‘I come now to the man who seems to me to be doing some of the most important work in the world in this field of existential psychology ...’ As it happened *Anatomy* ..., as it then stood, was never published, being replaced by *Introduction to the New Existentialism* in 1966 in which Maslow is not discussed in such detail. However, when he sent a copy of the latter to him, Maslow immediately contacted Wilson's US publisher, Houghton Mifflin, and pre-ordered 100 copies for his undergraduate students! In a letter to Wilson dated 10 October 1969 he affirmed that:

'... your Existential book was a major textbook job; ... *Beyond the Outsider* was both fascinating and important philosophical reading; and ... I enjoyed your autobiography very much and think that in it you have advanced your major ideas toward greater maturity, lucidity, clarity' (The 'autobiography' that Maslow mentions was *Voyage to a Beginning* (Wilson's 'preliminary autobiography')).

The two first met on 1 November 1966 when Wilson took time off from his position as writer-in-residence at Hollins College, Virginia, to visit Maslow at Brandeis University:

I had seen photographs of Abe, with his small grey moustache and hair combed straight back, so it looked almost like a crew cut. ... Photographs gave no impression of his main characteristic—his immense warmth and kindness. He was one of the few people I have met who struck me as genuinely good.

Regular readers of Wilson's books will know that he valued his fiction as much, if not more, than his non-fiction work, and used his novels to put his ideas into action. Unsurprisingly then, Maslow was written into his 1969 novel *The Philosopher's Stone* and the later *The Black Room* (1971). In a letter to Maslow dated 15 September 1968 he wrote:

I finished a novel—one of my best, I think—a sequel to *The Mind Parasites*, in which I manage to write about super-normal states of consciousness with far more precision than I achieved in the other book. You figure very largely in the first part, again under the name of Aaron Marks, and I call your PEs 'value experiences', and describe a series of experiments Marks does to cure alcoholics with the use of VEs, and then lengthening human life by giving intelligent old people VEs. ...


Clearly Maslow was not keen on a book being dedicated to him; when *The Philosopher's Stone* appeared in print the dedicatee was 'Jorge Luis

Borges'. Wilson's remark about Maslow figuring *again* as Aaron Marks refers to a short story, 'Margin of Darkness', eventually incorporated into *The Black Room*, which appeared in *The Minnesota Review* in 1966.

In the same letter Wilson suggested that he write a full-length book about Maslow: '... so I'm carefully collecting all the papers you've sent me, and in due course, I'll have to spend a week with you getting purely biographical material.' This led to Maslow recording four audio tapes and forwarding them to Wilson which he used as a basis for his book *New Pathways in Psychology: Maslow and the post-Freudian Revolution*, published by Victor Gollancz in 1972, two years after his subject's death (I recall, from one of my visits to Wilson, him bemoaning the fact that these tapes had been stolen from his house in Cornwall, sometime in the 1980s, by a Dutch journalist who purported to be a student of Maslow's work).

Wilson started work on the book when he was writer-in-residence at The Mediterranean Institute of Dowling College at Deya, Mallorca, Spain. In a long letter to Maslow from there on 5 November 1969, he wrote:

I am working on the assumption that you are the single most important figure in psychology since Freud, and a real turning point. I shall speak of the others, Frankl, Rogers, Rollo May, Boss etc. But I want this account of you to have a beautiful FLOW and simplicity, *like a detective story*. It may well take its place as the foundation of all future work on you ...

It would appear from their correspondence, shortly before his sudden death on 8 June 1970, that Maslow was attempting to secure a fellowship for Wilson at an American university in order to '... bring ... you to this country for a while—not only for your sake but so that we could work together on my ideas' (letter from Maslow to Wilson dated 30 April 1970). 

# REPORTS



*Spiritual Retreat for Monks at Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati*

## **Spiritual Retreat for Monks at Mayavati**

In the previous issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, we had given a detailed report of the inauguration of the new *Prabuddha Bharata* building. In continuation of this programme, a spiritual retreat for monks was organised from Sunday, 22 to Wednesday, 25 October 2017 attended by thirty-two monks of various centres from across India along with a visiting monk from the US.

The retreat's morning session was conducted in the green meadows of Mayavati surrounded by forest under the open sky and bright sun, which amply compensated the chillness of the morning cold and the afternoon session was held at the top floor of the newly inaugurated building.

The topics of discussion were *Mundaka Upanishad* and the spirit of sannyasa, understanding Advaita, practice of sadhana and different types of samadhi according to *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, *shravana-manana-nididhyasana*—Vedantic sadhana, Acharya Shankara's introduction to his commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*, and *Sannyasa Upanishad*; dealing with the present-day challenges of monastic and spiritual life—some constructive suggestions, vision of Swami Vivekananda in starting Advaita Ashrama and how to fulfil it in today's context, uniqueness of the Ramakrishna Monastic Order, practice of Advaita in the light of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. These topics were explained by Swami Bodhasarananda, Assistant General Secretary,

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math; Swami Tattwamayana, Minister-in-charge, Vedanta Society of Northern California; Swami Nityasthananda, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysuru; Swami Atmashraddhananda, Acharya, Probationers' Training Centre, Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math; Swami Satyamayananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Kanpur; Swami Muktidananda, Adhyaksha, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati; Swami Sarvasthananda, Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math; Swami Shashankananda, Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math; Swami Shuddhidananda, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata; and Swami Narasimhananda, Editor, *Prabuddha Bharata*.

At the end of the retreat, there was a session dedicated to 'Sharing of Ideas'. Eleven monks spoke about some special anecdotes in their life and some ideas that inspired and motivated them in their spiritual journey. Many of them quoted Swami Vivekananda's 'Song of A Sannyasin'. The moderator for this session was Swami Satyajnanananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Chennai.

Swami Sarvalokananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, Kolkata, gave the valedictory speech. Concluding remarks and the vote of thanks were given by Swami Vanishwarananda, Manager, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. All the participating monks praised the retreat and wanted to come back to Mayavati for more such spiritually elevating programmes.



## Relief

**Winter Relief:** The following centres distributed various items to needy people: **Aalo:** 65 blankets on 19 November 2017; **Asansol:** 24 blankets on 22 October; **Baranagar Math:** 300 blankets on 28 October and 26 November; **Bhopal:** 300 blankets from 12 to 15 November; **Cuttack** (sub-centre of Bhubaneswar): 200 blankets on 29 October; **Guwahati:** 300 blankets on 11 and 12 November; **Hatamuniguda:** 250 blankets on 25 November; **Ichapur:** 300 blankets on 1 and 2 November; **Indore:** 500 blankets on 19 November; **Jammu:** 102 blankets from 26 October to 28 November; **Jamtara:** 550 blankets from 27 October to 19 November; **Manasadwip:** 200 blankets from 6 to 20 November; **Mayavati:** 64 jackets and 2,176 pairs of socks from 18 September to 30 October; **Narendrapur:** 3,202 sweaters and 3,202 caps in October and November; **Narottam Nagar:** 519 blankets from 10 to 28 November; **Ootacamund:** 1,802 sweaters, 498 sweatshirts, and 3,677 jackets from 23 September to 16 October.

**Flood Relief:** **Gujarat:** **Vadodara** centre distributed 120 handcarts among the flood-affected people of Dhanera in Banaskantha district on 12 October; **Tamil Nadu:** Copious rains brought in by the northeast monsoon in Tamil Nadu in November caused flooding and severe water inundation in many areas. In response, **Chennai Students' Home** served 28,040 plates of cooked food to 5,982 persons and distributed 5,000 kg rice, 1,000 kg semolina, 1,000 kg dal, 1,000 litre cooking oil, 1,000 kg salt, 1,000 kg tamarind, 100 kg turmeric powder, 100 kg mustard seeds, 100 kg sambar powder, 200 kg coriander powder, 200 kg chilli powder, 1,000 kg sugar, and 1,000 mats among 1,000 affected families in Nagapattinam and Thiruvavur districts from 7 to 18 November; **West Bengal:** The following centres distributed various items among the flood-affected families: **Belgharia:** 500 saris, 1,200 blankets, and 500

jackets in Daspur area of Paschim Medinipur district on 10 November; **Gourhati:** 300 blankets in Khanakul-1 and Khanakul-2 blocks of Hooghly district from 5 to 20 November; **Jalpaiguri:** 200 blankets in Kaliaganj block of North Dinajpur district on 22 November; **Saradapitha:** 500 kg rice, 215 kg dal, 15 kg rice flakes, 500 kg potatoes, 2 kg puffed rice, 184 packets of biscuits, 600 saris, 400 kurtas, 12 adults' garments, 66 children's garments, 3 kg bleaching powder, and 276 litres of drinking water among 700 affected families in Amta-2 block of Howrah district from 15 to 22 September.

**Fire Relief:** In response to a fire accident in the remote Siyom village in West Siang district, **Aalo** centre distributed 4 blankets and a set of utensils to a family, and stationery items (notebooks, pens, pencils) to 2 students on 14 November.

**Distress Relief:** The following centres distributed various items to needy people: **Baranagar Math:** 200 saris on 28 October; **Bardhaman:** 100 saris, 2,669 shirts, 3,152 trousers, 766 tops, 2,950 belts, and 3,216 wallets from 23 September to 12 November; **Indore:** 250 saris on 19 November; **Kankurgachhi:** 1,002 educational kits (each kit containing an exercise book, 12 sketch pens, a ball pen, a pencil, an eraser, a sharpener, and a scale) on 14 November; **Kathamrita Bhavan, Kolkata:** 230 saris from 23 September to 8 October; **Narendrapur:** 1,518 children's garments in October and November; **Ootacamund:** 2,933 shirts and 3,021 trousers from 23 September to 6 October; **Pune:** 40 cycles from 20 October to 12 November; **Saradapitha:** 2,400 wallets and 1,980 belts on 4 November; **Sarisha:** 451 saris, 50 dhotis, and 102 assorted garments from 10 September to 24 October; **Vrindaban:** 430 kg rice, 430 kg flour, 107 kg dal, 107 kg mustard oil, 215 kg salt, 107 kg sugar, 21 kg tea leaves, 43 kg milk powder, 215 bars of bathing soap, 215 bars of washing soap, and 215 packets of washing powder on 29 October.



## Appeal for Human Excellence

*"They alone live, who live for others" — Swami Vivekananda.*

Friends and Devotees,

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We humbly appeal for your generous contribution towards the construction of Vivekananda Sabha Griha (depicted above), a multipurpose hall (resembling the historic Art Institute of Chicago of 1893) with the revised estimated cost about Rs.4.66 Crores, having an area of 16,000 sq. ft with a seating capacity of more than 1300 persons. It will serve as a convention hall for students, youth, and the general public, living in

the remote areas of North Bengal, to inspire human excellence, culture, philanthropy, spirituality, and most importantly national unity.

We also wish to inform that if any donor wishes to perpetuate the memory of his/her loving one, he/she may do so by contributing an appropriate amount. We would honour the donor's desire by displaying a suitable plaque to honour the deceased. Interested donors are requested to make inquiries in this regard to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ashramapara, Mission Road, Jalpaiguri-735101, West Bengal, India.

Donations may be contributed either through A/C payee cheque / draft, or money order that will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged. Cheques / drafts may kindly be drawn in favour of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Jalpaiguri.

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Yours in the service of the Lord,

**Swami Shivapremananda,  
Secretary**

Jalpaiguri

9<sup>th</sup> December, 2017



## **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama**

(A branch centre of Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Howrah: 711002)

**Mission Road, Ashrampara, Jalpaiguri: 735101  
West Bengal, India.**

Phone: 8902051967, 9434344492, 03561-228388/228945,

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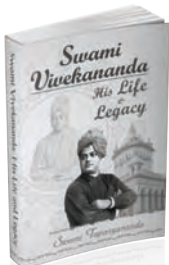
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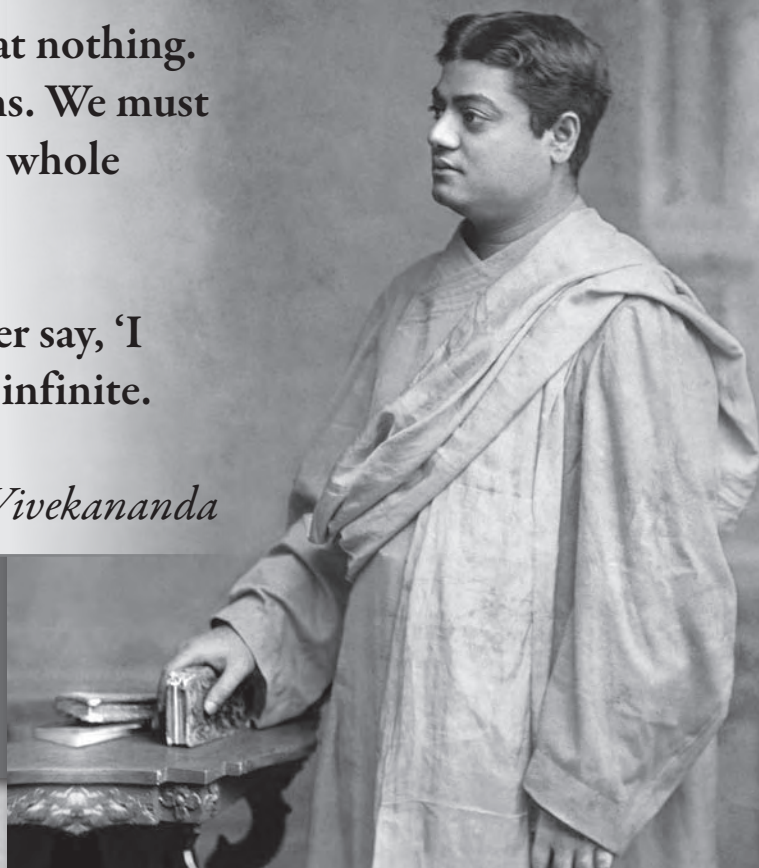
Each soul is potentially divine.  
The goal is to manifest this  
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Strength is life, weakness is  
death.

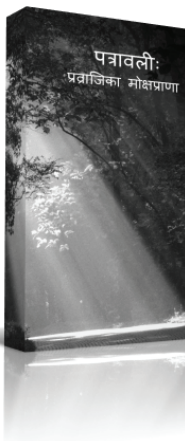
Fear nothing, stop at nothing.  
You will be like lions. We must  
rouse India and the whole  
world.

Never say, 'No', never say, 'I  
cannot', for you are infinite.

—*Swami Vivekananda*



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In religion, as in all other matters,  
discard everything that weakens  
you, have nothing to do with it.  
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